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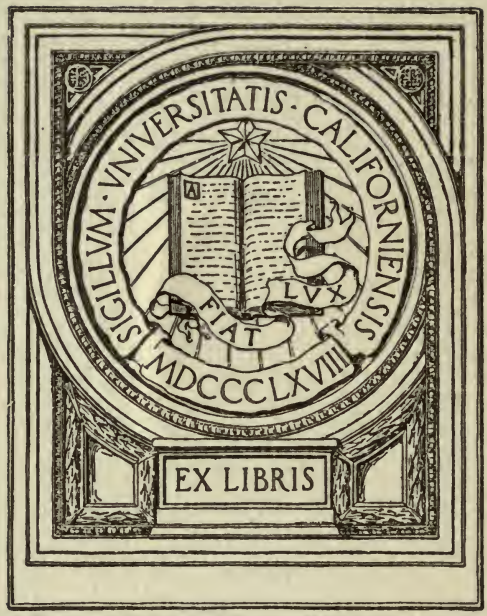
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A TREASURY OF ENGLISH PROSE

A TREASURY OF ENGLISH PROSE

EDITED BY

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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I HAD an idea that a Man might pass a very pleasant life in this manner. Let him on a certain day read a certain page of full Poesy or distilled Prose, and let him wander with it, and muse upon it and reflect from it, and dream upon it: until it becomes stale — But when will it do so? Never — When a man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting-post towards all the "two-and-thirty Palaces." How happy is such a voyage of conception, what delicious, diligent indolence!

KEATS.

731875

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A TREASURY OF ENGLISH PROSE

* * *

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

1340?–1400

O STELLIFERI CONDITOR ORBIS

O THOU maker of the wheel that beareth the stars, which that art fastened to thy perdurable chair, and turnest the heaven with a ravishing sway, and constrainest the stars to suffer thy law; so that the moon some time, shining with her full horns, meeting with all the beams of the sun her brother, hideth the stars that been less, and some time, when the moon pale with her dark horns approacheth the sun, leeseth her lights; and that the eve star, Hesperus, which that in the first time of the night bringeth forth her cold arisings, cometh oft again her used course, and is pale by the morrow at rising of the sun, and is then cleped Lucifer! Thou restrainest the day by shorter dwelling in the time of cold winter, that maketh the leaves fall. Thou dividest the swift tides of the night, when the hot summer is come. Thy might attempereth the variant seasons of the year, so that Zephyrus, the debonair wind, bringeth again in the first summer season the leaves that the wind that hight Boreas hath reft away in autumn (that is to say, the last end of summer); and the seeds that the star that

hight Arcturus saw been waxen high Corns when the star Sirius eschaufeth them. There is no thing unbound from his old law, ne forleteth the work of his proper estate. O governor, governing all things by certain end, why refuseth thou only to govern the works of men by due manner? Why suffrest thou that sliding fortune turneth so great interchangings of things; so that annoyous pain, that should duly punish felons, punisheth innocents? And folk of wicked manners sitten in high chairs; and annoying folk tread, and that unrightfully, on the necks of holy men; and virtue, clear and shining naturally, is hid in dark darknesses. . . . O thou, whatsoever thou be that knittest all bonds of things, look on this wretched earth. We men, that be nought a foul party, but a fair party of so great a work, we been tormented in this sea of fortune. Thou Governor withdraw and restrain the ravishing floods, and fasten and firm this earth stable with thilke bond by which thou governest the heaven that is so large.

Boece, Book I.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER
1552

WITH ANGELS AND ARCHANGELS

THEREFORE with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High. Amen.

The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper.

DEATH

MAN that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?

The Order for the Burial of the Dead.

I WILL CONSIDER

FOR I will consider Thy heavens, even the works of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained. What is man that Thou art mindful of him: and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him lower than the angels, to crown him with glory and worship. Thou makest him to have dominion of the works of Thy hands; and Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; all

sheep and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field; the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas.

Psalm viii.

IN CONVERTENDO

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then were we like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with joy. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice. Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the rivers in the south.

They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.

Psalm cxxvi.

I AM NOT HIGH-MINDED

Lord, I am not high-minded; I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too high for me. But I refrain my soul, and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from its mother: yea, my soul is even as a weaned child.

Psalm cxxxi.

SIR WALTER RALEGH
1552?–1618

THE STARS

And certainly it cannot be doubted, but the Stars are instruments of far greater use, than to give an obscure light, and for men to gaze on after sunset; it being manifest that the diversity of seasons, the Winters and Summers more hot and cold, are not so uncertained by the Sun and Moon alone, who alway keep one and the same course, but that the Stars have also their working therein.

And if we cannot deny but that God hath given virtues to springs and fountains, to cold earth, to plants and stones, minerals, and to the excremental parts of the basest living creatures, why should we rob the beautiful Stars of their working powers? For seeing they are many in number, and of eminent beauty and magnitude, we may not think that in the treasury of his wisdom, who is infinite, there can be wanting (even for every star) a peculiar virtue and operation; as every herb, plant, fruit, and flower adorning the face of the Earth hath the like. For as these were not created to beautify the earth alone, and to cover and shadow her dusty face, but otherwise for the use of man and beast, to feed them and to cure them; so were not those uncountable glorious bodies set in the firmament to no other end than to adorn it, but for instruments and organs of his divine Providence, so far as it has pleased his just will to determine.

The History of the World, Book I, chap. i.

DEATH

"I HAVE considered," saith Solomon, "all the works that are under the Sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit": but who believes it, till Death tells it to us? It was Death which, opening the conscience of Charles the Fifth, made him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre; and King Francis the First of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in Merindol and Cabrières, which till then he neglected. It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepassed happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness; and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacit.*

The History of the World, Book V, chap. vi.

RICHARD HOOKER
1554?–1600

THE LAWS OF NATURE

Now if Nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which now they have; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of Heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should as it were through a languishing faintness begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mother no longer able to yield them relief; what would become of man himself, whom these things now do all serve? See we not plainly, that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world?

Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, I, iii, 3.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
1554–1586

POETRY

Is it the lyric that most displeaseth, who with his tuned lyre, and well-accorded voice, giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts; who giveth moral precepts, and natural problems; who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens in singing the lauds of the immortal God? Certainly, I must confess my own barbarousness, I never heard the old song of *Percy and Douglas*, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil-apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?

An Apologie for Poetrie.

THE GOLDEN WORLD

NATURE never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done, neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make this too-much-loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.

Ibid.

FRANCIS BACON
1561–1626

THE SERVICE OF THE MUSES

WHETHER he believe me or no, there is no prison to the prison of the thoughts, which are free under the greatest tyrants. Shall any man make his conceit as an anchor, mured up with the compass of one beauty or person, that may have the liberty of all contemplation? Shall he exchange the sweet travelling through the universal variety for one wearisome and endless round or labyrinth? Let thy master, Squire, offer his services to the Muses. It is long since they received any into their court. They give alms continually at their gate, that many come to live upon; but few have they ever admitted into their palace. There shall he find secrets not dangerous to know, sides and parties not factious to hold, precepts and commandments not penal to disobey. The gardens of love wherein he now playeth himself are fresh to-day and fading to-morrow, as the sun comforts them or is turned from them. But the gardens of the Muses keep the privilege of the Golden Age; they ever flourish and are in league with Time. The monuments of wit survive the monuments of power: the verses of a poet endure without a syllable lost, while states and empires pass many periods. Let him not think he shall descend, for he is now upon a hill as a ship is mounted upon the ridge of a wave; but that hill of the Muses is above tempests, always clear and calm — a hill of the goodliest discovery that a man can

have, being a prospect upon all the errors and wanderings of the present and former times. Yea, as from a cliff it leadeth the eye beyond the horizon of time, and giveth no obscure divinations of times to come. So that if he will indeed lead *vitam vitalem*, a life that unites safety and dignity, pleasure and merit; if he will win admiration without envy; if he will be in the feast and not in the throng, in the light and not in the heat, let him embrace the life of study and contemplation.

Essex's Device, 1595; *Spedding, Life*, i, 379.

BOOKS

It is not possible to have the true pictures or statues of Cyrus, Alexander, Caesar, no, nor of the kings or great personages of much later years; for the originals cannot last, and the copies cannot but leese of the life and truth. But the images of men's wits and knowledges remain in books, exempted from the wrong of time, and capable of perpetual renovation. Neither are they fitly to be called images, because they generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages: so that, if the invention of the ship was thought so noble, which carrieth riches and commodities from place to place, and consociateth the most remote regions in participation of their fruits, how much more are letters to be magnified, which, as ships, pass through the vast sea of time, and make ages so distant to participate of the wisdom, illuminations, and inventions the one of the other?

Advancement of Learning, Book I.

TRUTH

But I cannot tell; this same Truth is a naked and open daylight, that doth not show the masques and mummeries and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily as candlelights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that, if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?

Essays: Of Truth.

SOLITUDE

But little do men perceive what Solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love.

Essays: Of Friendship.

THE BREATH OF FLOWERS

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes, like the warbling of music) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea, though it be in a

morning's dew. Bays likewise yield no smell as they grow; Rosemary little, nor Sweet Marjoram. That which, above all others, yields the sweetest smell in the air is the Violet, specially the white double Violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of April and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the Musk-Rose; then the Strawberry leaves dying with a most excellent cordial smell; then the flowers of the Vines — it is a little dust, like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth. Then Sweet Briar; then Wallflowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlour or lower chamber window; then Pinks, and Gilliflowers specially the matted Pink, and Clove Gilliflower; then the flowers of the Lime Tree; then the Honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of Bean flowers I speak not, because they are field-flowers. But those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three — that is Burnet, Wild Thyme, and Water Mints. Therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure, when you walk or tread.

Essays: Of Gardens.

THE LONGING FOR DEATH

Death arrives graciously only to such as sit in darkness, or lie heavy burthened with grief and irons; to the poor Christian that sits bound in the galley; to despairful widows, pensive prisoners, and deposed kings; to them whose fortune runs back, and whose spirits mutiny — unto such Death is a redeemer, and the grave a place for retiredness and rest.

These wait upon the shore of death, and waft

unto him to draw near, wishing above all others to see his star that they might be led to his place; wooing the remorseless Sisters to wind down the watch of their life, and to break them off before the hour.

Appendix to Essays (not by Bacon?).

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
1564–1616

HAMLET

I HAVE of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though, by your smiling you seem to say so.

Hamlet, ii, 2.

LOVE AND DEATH

THE poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person, *videlicet*, in a love-cause. Troilus had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club; yet he did what he could to die before, and he is one of the patterns of love. Leander, he would have lived many a fair year, though Hero had turned nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth,

he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont, and, being taken with the cramp, was drowned; and the foolish coroners of that age found it was "Hero of Sestos." But these are all lies: men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.

As You Like It, iv, 1.

MINIONS OF THE MOON

MARRY, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty: let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon; and let men say we be men of good government, being governed as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.

1 *Henry IV*, i, 2.

BEFORE AGINCOURT

K. Henry. For, though I speak it to you, I think the King is but a man, as I am. The violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are; yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army. . . .

Methinks I could not die anywhere so contented as in the King's company, his cause being just and his quarrel honourable. . . .

Will. But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make; when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day, and cry all, "We died at such a place"; some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afeard there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of anything when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it, whom to disobey were against all proportion of subjection.

K. Henry. So, if a son that is by his father sent about merchandize do sinfully miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wickedness, by your rule, should be imposed upon his father that sent him: or if a servant, under his master's command transporting a sum of money, be assailed by robbers and die in many irreconciled iniquities, you may call the business of the master the author of the servant's damnation. But this is not so: the King is not bound to answer the particular endings of his soldiers, the father of his son, nor the master of his servant; for they purpose not their death when they purpose their services. Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the arbitrament of swords, can try it out with all unspotted soldiers. Some, peradventure, have on them the guilt of premeditated and contrived murder; some, of beguiling virgins with the broken seals of perjury; some, making the wars their bulwark, that have before gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery. Now, if these men have defeated the law

and outrun native punishment, though they can outstrip men, they have no wings to fly from God; war is his beadle, war is his vengeance; so that here men are punished for before-breach of the King's laws in now the King's quarrel; where they feared the death they have borne life away, and where they would be safe they perish. Then, if they die unprovided, no more is the King guilty of their damnation than he was before guilty of those impieties for the which they are now visited. Every subject's duty is the King's, but every subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience; and dying so, death is to him advantage; or not dying, the time was blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gained: and in him that escapes, it were not sin to think, that, making God so free an offer, He let him outlive that day to see His greatness, and to teach others how they should prepare.

Henry V, iv, 1.

AUTHORISED VERSION OF THE BIBLE
1611

DEDICATION TO JAMES I

GREAT and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us the people of England, when first he sent your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us. For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well unto our Sion, that upon the setting of that bright Occidental Star, Queen Elizabeth, of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk; and that it should hardly be known, who was to direct the unsettled State; the appearance of Your Majesty, as of the Sun in his strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists, and gave unto all that were well affected exceeding cause of comfort; especially when we beheld the government established in your Highness, and your hopeful seed, by an undoubted title, and this also accompanied with peace and tranquillity at home and abroad.

NOAH'S SACRIFICE

AND the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While

the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Genesis viii, 21, 22.

THE VISION OF MOSES

And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.

Exodus xxxiv, 5–8.

THREATENED PUNISHMENTS

And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. . . . And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. . . . And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

Leviticus xxvi, 18, 19, 33, 36.

BALAAM'S BLESSING

And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.

And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. . . .

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.

Numbers xxiii, 5–9; xxiv, 5, 6.

THE BLESSING OF JACOB

And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills.

Deuteronomy xxxiii, 13–15.

DAVID'S LAMENT FOR SAUL AND JONATHAN

SAUL and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

2 *Samuel* i, 23–27.

THE VISION OF ELIJAH

AND, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

1 *Kings* xix, 11, 12.

JOB CURSES HIS DAY

AFTER this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither

let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day: because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.

There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

Job iii, 1–22.

MAN

Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,

Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth! They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

Job iv, 12–20.

WISDOM

THERE is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it....

But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof....

Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hidden from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of

the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure. When he made a decree for rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Job xxviii, 7–8; 12–15; 20–28.

GOD'S CHALLENGE TO JOB

THEN the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days;

and caused the dayspring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? . . .

Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominon thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? . . .

Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? . . .

Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn? . . .

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth

against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, Ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. . . .

Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes; his nose pierceth through snares. . . .

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? . . .

By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. . . . He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot

of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary. Upon the earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

Job xxxviii, 1–13; 22–24; 31–35; 39–40: xxxix, 9–12; 19–25: xl, 15–24: xli, 1–5; 18; 31–34.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm xxiii.

I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. *Psalm* cxxi.

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our

harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song: and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Psalm cxxxvii.

THE HARLOT

For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evéning, in the black and dark night.

And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed

with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. *Proverbs* vii, 6–18.

VANITY OF VANITIES

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man

to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers, and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before

me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. *Ecclesiastes* i; ii, 1–11.

ALL THINGS COME ALIKE

All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity,

which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

Ecclesiastes ix, 2–9.

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity.

Ecclesiastes xii, 1–8.

THE SPRING

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter

is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Solomon's Song ii, 10–13.

LOVE

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

Solomon's Song viii, 6–7.

BABYLON

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

Isaiah xiii, 19–22.

HOW ART THOU FALLEN!

And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! . . .

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

Isaiah xiv, 3–4, 9–13.

COMFORT YE

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made

low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. . . .

Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. . . .

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?

Isaiah xl, 1–8, 21–22, 28.

TAKE NO THOUGHT

THEREFORE I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field,

how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Matthew vi, 25–29.

COME UNTO ME

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew xi, 28–30.

JERUSALEM

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew xxiii, 37.

PAUL'S FAITH

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans* viii, 35–39.

CHARITY

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

1 *Corinthians* xiii.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

THERE is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. . . .

Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 1 *Corinthians* xv, 41–43; 51–55.

LET US ENJOY

OUR life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave. For we are born at all adventure, and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been; for the breath in our nostrils is as smoke, and a little spark in the moving of our heart, which being extinguished, our body shall be turned into ashes, and our spirit shall vanish as the soft air, and our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall have our works in remembrance,

and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and overcome with the heat thereof. For our time is a very shadow that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning; for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again. Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness, let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place; for this is our portion, and our lot is this.

The Wisdom of Solomon, ii, 1–9.

FEAR

For when unrighteous men thought to oppress the holy nation, they being shut up in their houses, the prisoners of darkness, and fettered with the bonds of a long night, lay there exiled from the eternal providence. For while they supposed to lie hid in their secret sins, they were scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness, being horribly astonished, and troubled with strange apparitions. For neither might the corner that held them keep them from fear; but noises as of waters falling down sounded about them, and sad visions appeared unto them with heavy countenances. No power of the fire might give them light; neither could the bright flames of the stars endure to lighten that horrible night. Only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself, very dreadful; for being much terrified, they thought the things which they

saw to be worse than the sight they saw not. As for the illusions of art magic, they were put down, and their vaunting in wisdom was reproved with disgrace. For they that promised to drive away terrors and troubles from a sick soul, were sick themselves of fear, worthy to be laughed at. For though no terrible thing did fear them, yet being scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents, they died for fear, denying that they saw the air, which could of no side be avoided. (For wickedness, condemned by her own witness, is very timorous, and being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things. For fear is nothing else but a betraying of succours which reason offereth. And the expectation from within being less, counteth the ignorance more than the cause which bringeth the torment.) But they sleeping the same sleep that night, which was indeed intolerable, and which came upon them out of the bottoms of inevitable hell, were partly vexed with monstrous apparitions, and partly fainted, their heart failing them; for a sudden fear, and not looked for, came upon them. So then whosoever there fell down was straitly kept, shut up in a prison without iron bars. For whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or labourer in the field, he was overtaken, and endured that necessity, which could not be avoided, for they were all bound with one chain of darkness. Whether it were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a pleasing fall of water running violently, or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could not be seen of skipping beasts, or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains — these things made them to swoon for

fear. For the whole world shined with a clear light, and none were hindered in their labour; over them only was spread an heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterwards receive them; but yet were they unto themselves more grievous than the darkness.

The Wisdom of Solomon, xvii.

JOHN DONNE
1573–1631

GOD'S BOUNTY

God made Sun and Moon to distinguish seasons, and day and night, and we cannot have the fruits of the earth but in their seasons; but God hath made no decree to distinguish the seasons of His mercies; in Paradise the fruits were ripe the first minute, and in Heaven it is always Autumn, His mercies are ever at their maturity. We ask *panem quotidianum*, our daily bread, and God never says, You should have come yesterday; He never says, You must come again to-morrow, but to-day if you will hear His voice, to-day He will hear you. If some king of the earth have so large an extent of Dominion in North and South, as that he hath Winter and Summer together in his Dominions, so large an extent East and West, as that he hath day and night together in his Dominions, so much more hath God mercy and judgment together. He brought light out of darkness, not out of a lesser light; He can bring thy Summer out of Winter, though thou have no Spring; though in the ways of fortune, or understanding, or conscience, thou have been benighted till now, wintered and frozen, clouded and eclipsed, damped and benumbed, smothered and stupified till now, now God comes to thee, not as in the dawning of the day, not as in the bud of the spring, but as the Sun at noon to illustrate all shadows, as the sheaves in harvest to fill all penuries. All occasions invite His mercies, and all times are His seasons. *Eighty Sermons*, p. 13.

THE EYE OF GOD

God cannot be mocked, saith the Apostle, nor God cannot be blinded. He seeth all the way, and at thy last gasp he will make thee see too through the multiplying glass, the spectacle of Desperation. Canst thou hope that that God that seeth this dark earth, through all the vaults and arches of the several spheres of Heaven, that seeth thy body through all thy stone walls, and seeth thy soul through that which is darker than all those, thy corrupt flesh — canst thou hope that that God can be blinded with drawing a curtain between thy sin and him? When he is all eye, canst thou hope to put out that eye with putting out a candle?

Fifty Sermons, p. 337.

ANGELS

That there are distinct orders of Angels, assuredly I believe, but what they are, I cannot tell. . . . They are Creatures that have not so much of a body as flesh is, as froth is, as a vapour is, as a sigh is; and yet with a touch they shall moulder a rock into less atoms than the sand that it stands upon, and a millstone into smaller flour than it grinds. They are Creatures made, and yet not a minute elder than when they were first made, if they were made before all measure of time began; nor, if they were made in the beginning of time, and be now six thousand years old, have they one wrinkle of age in their face, one sob of weariness in their lungs. They are *primogeniti Dei*, God's eldest sons; they are super-elementary meteors; they hang between the nature of God and the nature of man, and are of middle condition.

And (if we may offencelessly express it so) they are *aenigmata divina*, the Riddles of Heaven and perplexities of speculation.

Fifty Sermons, p. 7.

TERRIBLE THINGS

In the frame and constitution of all religions, these materials, these elements have ever entered; some words of a remote signification, not vulgarly understood, some actions of a kind of half-horror and amazement, some places of reservation and retiredness, and appropriation to some sacred persons, and inaccessible to all others. Not to speak of the services and sacrifices of the Gentiles, and those self-manglings and lacerations of the Priests of Isis, and of the Priests of Baal (faintly counterfeited in the scourgings and flagellations in the Roman Church) in that very discipline which was delivered from God by Moses, the service was full of mystery and horror and reservations; "by terrible things" (sacrifices of blood in manifold effusions) "God answered them" then. So the matter of doctrine was delivered mysteriously, and with much reservation, and in in-intelligibleness. . . . God says, "I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the Prophets." They were visions, they were similitudes, not plain and evident things, obvious to every understanding, that God led his people by. . . .

God in the Old, and Christ in the New Testament, hath conditioned his doctrine, and his religion (that is, his outward worship) so as that evermore there shall be preserved a majesty, and a reverential fear, and an awful discrimination of divine things from the civil, and evermore something reserved to be en-

quired after, and laid up in the mouth of the priest, that the people might acknowledge an obligation from him in the exposition and application thereof. Nay, this way of "answering by terrible things" (that is, by things that imprint a holy horror and a religious reverence) is much more in the Christian Church than it can have been in any other religion.

Eighty Sermons, p. 690.

PRAYER

When we consider with a religious seriousness the manifold weaknesses of the strongest devotions in time of prayer, it is a sad consideration. I throw myself down in my chamber, and I call in and invite God and his angels thither; and when they are there, I neglect God and his angels for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door; I talk on in the same posture of praying, eyes lifted up, knees bowed down, as though I prayed to God; and if God or his angels should ask me when I thought last of God in that prayer, I cannot tell; sometimes I find I had forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it I cannot tell. A memory of yesterday's pleasures, a fear of to-morrow's dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine ear, a light in mine eye, an anything, a nothing, a fancy, a chimera in my brain, troubles me in my prayer.

Ibid., p. 820.

UNCONSCIOUS PRAYER

That soul that is accustomed to direct herself to God upon every occasion; that, as a flower at sunrising, conceives a sense of God in every beam of his, and spreads and dilates itself towards him in a thank-

fulness, in every small blessing that he sheds upon her; that soul, that as a flower at the sun's declining, contracts and gathers in and shuts up herself as though she had received a blow, whensoever she hears her Saviour wounded by an oath or blasphemy or execration; that soul, who, whatsoever string be strucken in her, base or treble, her high or her low estate, is ever tuned toward God — that soul prays sometimes when it does not know that it prays.

Eighty Sermons, p. 90.

WHEN I CONSIDER

When I consider what I was in my parents' loins — a substance unworthy of a word, unworthy of a thought — when I consider what I am now — a volume of diseases bound up together — a dry cinder, . . . an aged child, a grey-haired infant, and but the ghost of mine own youth; when I consider what I shall be at last, by the hand of death in my grave — first but putrefaction, and then not so much as putrefaction — I shall not be able to send forth so much as an ill air, not any air at all, but shall be all insipid, tasteless, savourless dust; for a while all worms, and after a while not so much as worms, sordid, senseless, nameless dust; — when I consider the past and present and future state of this body in this world, I am able to conceive, able to express, the worst that can befall it in nature, and the worst that can be inflicted upon it by man or fortune: but the least degree of glory that God hath prepared for that body in heaven, I am not able to express, not able to conceive.

Ibid., p. 223.

LET ME WITHER

LET me wither and wear out mine age in a discomfortable, in an unwholesome, in a penurious prison, and so pay my debts with my bones, and recompense the wastefulness of my youth with the beggary of mine age; let me wither in a spittle under sharp and foul and infamous diseases, and so recompense the wantonness of my youth with that loathsomeness in mine age; yet, if God withdraw not his spiritual blessings, his grace, his patience; if I can call my suffering his doing, my passion his action — all this is temporal, is but a caterpillar got into one corner of my garden, but a mildew fallen upon one acre of my corn; the body of all, the substance of all is safe, as long as the soul is safe. But when I shall trust to that which we call a good spirit, and God shall deject and impoverish and evacuate that spirit; when I shall rely upon a moral constancy, and God shall shake and enfeeble and enervate, destroy and demolish that constancy; when I shall think to refresh myself in the serenity and sweet air of a good conscience, and God shall call up the damps and vapours of Hell itself, and spread a cloud of diffidence, and an impenetrable crust of desperation upon my conscience; when health shall fly from me, and I shall lay hold upon riches to succour me and comfort me in my sickness, and riches shall fly from me, and I shall snatch after favour and good opinion to comfort me in my poverty; when even this good opinion shall leave me, and calumnies and misinformations shall prevail against me; when I shall need peace, because there is none but thou, O Lord, that should stand for me, and then shall find that all the wounds that have come from

thy hand, all the arrows that stick in me from thy quiver; when I shall see that because I have given myself to my corrupt nature, thou hast changed thine; and because I am all evil towards thee, therefore thou hast given over being good towards me; when it comes to this height, that the fever is not in the humours, but in the spirit; that mine enemy is not an imaginary enemy, Fortune, nor a transitory enemy, malice in great persons; but a real, and an irresistible and an inexorable and an everlasting enemy, the Lord of Hosts himself, the Almighty God himself — the Almighty God himself only knows that weight of this affliction; and except he put in the *pondus gloriae*, that exceeding weight of an eternal glory with his own hand into the other scale, we are weighed down, we are swallowed up, irreparably, irrevocably, irremediably.

Eighty Sermons, pp. 665–66.

SLEEP

"The sun must not set upon mine anger"; much less will I let the sun set upon the anger of God towards me, or sleep in an unrepented sin. Every night's sleep is a *nunc dimittis;* then the Lord lets his servant depart in peace. Thy lying down is a valediction, a parting, a taking leave, (shall I say so?) a shaking hands with God—let these hands be clean. Enter into thy grave, thy metaphorical, thy quotidian grave, thy bed, as thou entered'st into the Church at first, by water, by baptism; re-baptise thyself every night in Job's "snow water," in holy tears that may cool inordinate lusts of thy heart. . . . Sleep with clean hands, either kept clean all day by integrity, or washed at night by repentance; and whensoever thou

wakest, though all Job's messengers thunder about thee, and all Job's friends multiply misinterpretations against thee, yet Job's protestations shall be thy protestations, what end soever God have in this proceeding. "It is not for any injustice in my hands."

Eighty Sermons, p. 129.

THE SICK SOUL

He shall suspect his religion, suspect his repentance, suspect the comforts of the Minister, suspect the efficacy of the Sacrament, suspect the mercy of God himself. Every fit of an ague is an earthquake that swallows him, every fainting of the knee is a step to Hell, every lying down at night is a funeral, and every quaking is a rising at judgment; every bell that distinguishes times is a passing-bell, and every passing-bell his own; every singing in the ear is an angel's trumpet; at every dimness of the candle he hears that voice, "Fool, this night they will fetch away thy soul," and in every judgment denounced against sin, he hears an *ito maledicte* upon himself, "Go thou accursed into hell fire."

Fifty Sermons, p. 169.

THE DEATH-BED

When I lie under the hands of that enemy that hath reserved himself to the last, to my last bed, then when I shall be able to stir no limb in any other measure than a fever or a palsy shall shake them; when everlasting darkness shall have an inchoation in the present dimness of mine eyes, and the everlasting gnashing in the present chattering of my teeth, and the everlasting worm in the present gnawing of the agonies

of my body, and anguishes of my mind; when the last enemy shall watch my remediless body and my disconsolable soul, there, there, where not the physician in his way, perchance not the priest in his, shall be able to give any assistance; and when he hath sported himself with my misery upon that stage, my deathbed, shall shift the scene, and throw me from that bed into the grave, and there triumph over me, God knows how many generations, till the Redeemer, my Redeemer, the Redeemer of all me, body as well as soul, come again . . . in that consideration, in that apprehension, he is the powerfulest, the fearfulest enemy; and yet even there this enemy *abolebitur*, he shall be destroyed.

Eighty Sermons, p. 149.

DUST

It comes equally to us all, and makes us all equal when it comes. The ashes of an oak in the chimney are no epitaph of that oak, to tell me how high or how large that was; it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too; it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldest not, as of a Prince whom thou couldest not look upon, will trouble thine eyes, if the wind blow it thither; and when a whirlwind hath blown the dust of the churchyard into the Church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the Church into the churchyard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, This is the patrician, this is the noble flour, and this the yeomanly, this the plebeian bran.

Ibid., p. 148.

ETERNITY

A STATE but of one day, because no night shall overtake or determine it, but such a day as is not of a thousand thousand years, which is the longest measure in the scriptures, but of a thousand millions of millions of generations. . . . A day that hath no *pridie* nor *postridie;* yesterday doth not usher it in, nor to-morrow shall not drive it out. Methusalem, with all his hundreds of years, was but a mushroom of a night's growth to this day; and all the four Monarchies, with all their thousands of years, and all the powerful Kings, and all the beautiful Queens of this world, were but as a bed of flowers, some gathered at six, some at seven, some at eight — all in one morning in respect of this day. In all the two thousand years of nature before the law given by Moses, and the two thousand years of law, before the Gospel given by Christ, and the two thousand years of Grace which are running now (of which last hour we have heard three quarters strike, more than fifteen hundred of this last two thousand spent) in all this six thousand, and in all those which God may be pleased to add, *in domo patris*, in this house of his Father's, there was never heard quarter-clock to strike, never seen minute-glass to turn.

Eighty Sermons, pp. 747–48.

VERMICULATION

FOR us that die now, and sleep in the state of the dead, we must all pass this posthume death, this death after death, nay, this death after burial, this dissolution after dissolution, this death of corruption and putrefaction, of vermiculation and incineration,

of dissolution and dispersion in and from the grave. When these bodies that have been the children of royal parents, and the parents of royal children, must say with Job, "Corruption, thou art my father," and to the worm, "Thou art my mother and sister." Miserable riddle, when the same worm must be my mother and my sister and myself. Miserable incest, when I must be married to mine own mother and my sister; and be both father and mother to mine own mother and sister; beget and bear that worm which is all that miserable penury; when my mouth shall be filled with dust, and the worm shall feed, and feed sweetly upon me; when the ambitious man shall have no satisfaction if the poorest alive tread upon him, nor the poorest receive any contentment in being made equal to princes, for they shall be equal but in dust. One dieth at his full strength, being wholly at ease and in quiet, and another dies in the bitterness of his soul, and never eats with pleasure; but they lie down alike in the dust, and the worm covers them. In Job and in Esay it covers them, and is spread under them. The worm is spread under thee, and the worm covers thee. There 's the mats and the carpet that lie under; and there 's the state and the canopy that hangs over the greatest of the sons of men. Even those bodies that were the temple of the Holy Ghost come to this dilapidation, to ruin, to rubbish, to dust: even the Israel of the Lord — and Jacob himself had no other specification, no other denomination but that, *Vermis Jacob*, thou worm Jacob. Truly the consideration of this posthume death, this death after burial — that after God, with whom are the issues of death, hath delivered me from the death of the womb by bringing me into the world, and from the manifold deaths

of the world by laying me in the grave, I must die again in an incineration of this flesh, and in a dispersion of this dust; that that monarch who spread over many nations alive, must in his dust lie in a corner of that sheet of lead, and there but so long as that lead will last; and that private and retired man, that thought himself his own forever, and never came forth, must in his dust of the grave be published, and (such are the revolutions of graves) be mingled with the dust of every highway and of every dunghill, and swallowed in every puddle and pond — this is the most inglorious and contemptible vilification, the most deadly and peremptory nullification of man, that we can consider.

Death's Duell, pp. 20–22.

ETERNAL BANISHMENT

When all is done, the hell of hells, the torment of torments, is the everlasting absence of God, and the everlasting impossibility of returning to his presence; *Horrendum est*, says the Apostle, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God," . . . but to fall out of the hands of the living God is a horror beyond our expression, beyond our imagination.

That God should let my soul fall out of his hand, into a bottomless pit, and roll an unremoveable stone upon it, and leave it to that which it finds there, (and it shall find that there, which it never imagined, till it came thither) and never think more of that soul, never have more to do with it; that of that providence of God, that studies the life of every weed, and worm, and ant, and spider, and toad, and viper, there should never, never any beam flow out upon me; that that God, who looked upon me when I was nothing, and

called me when I was not, as though I had been, out of the womb and depth of darkness, will not look upon me now, when though a miserable and banished and damned creature, yet I am his creature still, and contribute something to his glory, even in my damnation; that that God, who hath so often looked upon me in my foulest uncleanness, and when I had shut out the eye of the day, the Sun, and the eye of the night, the taper, and the eyes of the world, with curtains and windows and doors, did yet see me, and see me in mercy, by making me see that he saw me, and sometimes brought me to a present remorse, and (for that time) to a forbearing of that sin, should so turn himself from me to his glorious Saints and Angels, as that no Saint or Angel, nor Christ Jesus himself should ever pray him to look towards me, never remember him that such a soul there is; that that God, who hath so often said to my soul, *Quare morieris?* Why wilt thou die? and so often sworn to my soul, *Vivat Dominus*, as the Lord liveth I would not have thee die, but live, will neither let me die, nor let me live, but die an everlasting life, and live an everlasting death; that that God, who when he could not get into me by standing and knocking, by his ordinary means of entering, by his word, his mercies, hath applied his judgments, and hath shaked the house, this body, with agues and palsies, and set this house on fire with fevers and calentures, and frightened the master of the house, my soul, with horrors and heavy apprehensions, and so made an entrance into me; that that God should frustrate all his own purposes and practises upon me, and leave me, and cast me away as though I had cost him nothing; that this God at last should let this soul go away as a smoke,

as a vapour, as a bubble, and that then this soul cannot be a smoke, a vapour, nor a bubble, but must lie in darkness as long as the Lord of light is light itself, and never spark of that light reach to my soul — what Tophet is not Paradise, what brimstone is not amber, what gnashing is not a comfort, what gnawing of the worm is not a tickling, what torment is not a marriage bed to this damnation, to be secluded eternally, eternally, eternally from the sight of God? *Eighty Sermons*, p. 776.

SENTENCES

He that starves as well as he that surfeits, he that lies in the spitting places and excremental corners of the streets, as well as he that sits upon carpets in the region of perfumes.

Ibid., p. 164.

There is not so poor a creature, but may be thy glass to see God in. The greatest flat glass that can be made cannot represent anything greater than it is. If every gnat that flies were an Archangel, all that could but tell me that there is a God; and the poorest worm that creeps tells me that. If I should ask the basilisk, how camest thou by those killing eyes, he would tell me, thy God made me so.

Ibid., p. 226.

They have put God and that man into the balance, and weighed them together, and found God too light. That mighty, that weighty, that ponderous God, that blasts a State with a breath, that melts a Church with a look, that moulders a world with a touch.

Ibid., p. 245.

THE dead hear not thunder, nor feel they an earthquake. If the cannon batter that church's walls in which they lie buried, it wakes not them.

Eighty Sermons, p. 257.

THE shutting of thine eyes from looking upon things in things, upon creatures in creatures, upon beauty in that face that misleads thee, or upon honour in that place that possesses thee.

Ibid., p. 260.

Caemetaria are *dormitaria;* churchyards are our beds. And in those beds, and in all other beds of death (for the dead have their beds in the sea too, and sleep even in the restless motion thereof) the voice of the Archangel and the trumpet of God shall awake them.

Ibid., p. 263.

WE are all conceived in close prison . . . and then all our life is but a going out to the place of execution, to death. Nor was there ever any man seen to sleep in the cart between Newgate and Tyburn — between prison and the place of execution, does any man sleep? But we sleep all the way; from the womb to the grave we are never thoroughly awake.

Ibid., p. 267.

THE contemplation of God and heaven is a kind of burial, and sepulchre and rest of the soul; and in this death of rapture and ecstacy, in this death of the contemplation of my interest in my Saviour, I shall find myself and all my sins enterred and entombed in his wounds, and like a lily in Paradise, out of red earth, I shall see my soul rise out of his blade in a candour,

and in an innocence contracted there, acceptable in the sight of his Father.

Eighty Sermons, p. 274.

He will not be satisfied . . . with those quails which God sends (the preaching of solid and fundamental doctrines) but must have Birds of Paradise, unrevealed mysteries out of God's own bosom, preached unto him.

Ibid., p. 308.

An usurer can show me his bags, and an extortioner his houses, the fruits, the revenues of his sin; but where will the blasphemer show me his blasphemy, or what he hath got by it? The licentious man hath had his love in his arms, and the envious man hath had his enemy in the dust, but wherein hath the blasphemer hurt God?

Ibid., p. 344.

As the world is the whole frame of the world, God hath put into it a reproof, a rebuke lest it should seem eternal, which is a sensible decay and age in the whole frame of the world and every piece thereof. The seasons of the year irregular and distempered; the sun fainter and languishing; men less in stature and shorter-lived. No addition, but only every year new sorts, new species of worms and flies and sicknesses, which argue more and more putrefaction of which they are engendered.

Ibid., p. 357.

To save this body from the condemnation of everlasting corruption, when the worms that we breed

are our betters, because they have a life; where the dust of dead kings is blown into the street, and the dust of the street blown into the river, and the muddy river tumbled into the sea.

Eighty Sermons, p. 398.

"THE eagle stirreth up her nest," and then, as it is added there, "she fluttereth over her young"; the preacher maketh a holy noise in the conscience of the congregation, and when he hath awakened them by stirring the nest, he casts some claps of thunder, some intimidations, in denouncing the judgments of God; and he flings open the gates of Heaven that they may hear, and look up, and see a man sent by God, with power to infuse his fear upon them.

Ibid., p. 435.

THE bells tell him in the night, and fame tells him in the day, that he himself melts and drops away piecemeal in the departing of parents and wife and children out of this world. *Ibid.*, p. 447.

THEREFORE he brings us to death, that by that gate he might lead us into life everlasting; and he hath not discovered, but made that Northern passage, to pass by the frozen sea of calamity and tribulation, to Paradise, to the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Ibid., p. 463.

MEN and women call one another inconstant, and accuse one another of having changed their minds, when, God knows, they have but changed the object of their eye, and seen a better white or red.

Ibid., p. 483.

If all those manifold and fearful judgments, which swell in every chapter, and blow in every verse, and thunder in every line of every book of the Bible.

Eighty Sermons, p. 693.

To find a languishing wretch in a sordid corner, not only in a penurious fortune, but in an oppressed conscience, his eyes under a diverse suffocation, smothered with smoke, and smothered with tears, his ears estranged from all salutations, and visits, and all sounds but his own sighs, and the storms and thunders and earthquakes of his own despair; to enable this man to open his eyes and see that Christ Jesus stands before him . . . to bow down those heavens, and bring them into his sad chamber.

Ibid., p. 762. (p. 762-3)

A fountain breaks out in the wilderness, but that fountain cares not whether any man comes to fetch water or no; a fresh and fit gale blows upon the sea, but it cares not whether the mariners hoist sail or no; a rose blows in your garden, but it calls you not to smell it.

Fifty Sermons, p. 37.

Shall we that are but worms, but silk-worms, but glow-worms at the best, chide God that he hath made slow-worms, and other venomous creeping things? Shall we, that are nothing but boxes of poison in ourselves, reprove God for making toads and spiders in the world? *Ibid.*, p. 143.

If there were any other way to be saved and to get to Heaven than by being born into this life, I would

not wish to have come into this world. And now that God hath made this life a bridge to Heaven, it is but a giddy and vertiginous thing to stand long gazing upon so narrow a bridge, and over so deep and roaring waters and desperate whirlpools as the world abounds with.

Fifty Sermons, p. 223.

WHAT extraction of wormwood can be so bitter, what exaltation of fire can be so raging, what multiplying of talents can be so heavy, what stiffness of destiny can be so inevitable, what confection of gnawing worms, of gnashing teeth, of howling cries, of scalding brimstone, of palpable darkness can be so, so insupportable, so inexpressible, so inimaginable, as the curse and malediction of God?

Ibid., p. 227.

THIS whisperer wounds thee, and with a stiletto of gold; he strangles thee with scarves of silk, he smothers thee with the down of phoenixes, he stifles thee with a perfume of amber.

Ibid., p. 235.

WE are then upon the contemplation of the joys of heaven, which are everlasting, and must we bring them into the discourse of an hour?

Ibid., p. 279.

IF I had Methusalem's years . . . if I could speak till the angels' trumpets blew, and you had the patience of martyrs, and could be content to hear me till you heard the *surgite mortui:* till you were called to meet the Lord Jesus in the clouds, all that time would not

make up one minute, all those words could not make up one syllable, towards this eternity, the period of this blessedness.

Fifty Sermons, p. 413.

He that should first put to sea in a tempest, he might easily think, it were in the nature of the sea to be rough always. He that sees every churchyard swell with the waves and billows of graves, can think it no extraordinary thing to die, when he knows he set out in a storm, and that he was born into the world upon that condition, to go out of it again.

Twenty-seven Sermons, p. 13.

God is the Lord of Hosts, and he can proceed by martial law: he can hang thee upon the next tree; he can choke thee with a crumb, with a drop, at a voluptuous feast; he can sink down the stage and the player, the bed of wantonness and the wanton actor, into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell; he can surprise thee, even in the act of sin.

Ibid., p. 82.

O glorious beauty, infinitely reverend, infinitely fresh and young, we come late to thy love, if we consider the past days of our lives, but early, if thou beest pleased to reckon with us from this hour of the shining of thy grace upon us.

Ibid., p. 269.

The sun is setting to thee, and that for ever; thy houses and furnitures, thy gardens and orchards, thy titles and offices, thy wife and children are departing from thee, and that for ever; a cloud of faintness is

come over thine eyes, and a cloud of sorrow over all theirs.

Twenty-seven Sermons, p. 295.

In the beginning of the world we presume all things to have been produced in their best state; all was perfect, and yet how soon a decay! All was summer, and yet how soon a fall of the leaf!

Ibid., p. 314.

ROBERT BURTON
1577–1640

THE COPERNICAN HYPOTHESIS

Copernicus, Atlas his successor, is of opinion, the earth is a planet, moves and shines to others, as the Moon doth to us; Digges, Gilbert, Keplerus, Origanus, and others defend this hypothesis of his in sober sadness, and that the Moon is inhabited: if it be so that the Earth is a Moon, then are we also giddy, vertiginous and lunatic within this sublunary maze.

Anatomy of Melancholy; Democritus to the Reader.

MELANCHOLY

Most pleasant it is at first, to such as are melancholy given, to lie in bed whole days, and keep their chambers, to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by a brookside, to meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject, which shall affect them most; *amabilis insania*, and *mentis gratissimus error*. A most incomparable delight it is so to melancholize, and build castles in the air, to go smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose, and strongly imagine they represent, or that they see acted or done. *Blandae quidem ab initio*, saith Lemnius, to conceive and meditate of such pleasant things, sometimes "present, past, or to come," as Rhasis speaks. So delightsome these toys are at first, they could spend whole days and nights without sleep, even whole years alone in such contemplations and fantastical meditations,

which are like unto dreams, and they will hardly be drawn from them or willingly interrupt; so pleasant their vain conceits are, that they hinder their ordinary tasks and necessary business; they cannot address themselves to them, or almost to any study or employment; these fantastical and bewitching thoughts so covertly, so feelingly, so urgently, so continually set upon, creep in, insinuate, possess, overcome, distract, and detain them, they cannot, I say, go about their more necessary business, stave off or extricate themselves, but are ever musing, melancholizing, and carried along, as he (they say) that is led round about an heath with a Puck in the night; they run earnestly on in this labyrinth of anxious and solicitous melancholy meditations, and cannot well or willingly refrain, easily leave off, winding and unwinding themselves as so many clocks, and still pleasing their humours; until at last the scene is turned upon a sudden by some bad object; and they, being now habituated to such vain meditations and solitary places, can endure no company, can ruminate of nothing but harsh and distasteful subjects.

Anatomy of Melancholy; Democritus to the Reader.
I, sect. 2, memb. 2, subs. 6.

BOATING

To take a boat in a pleasant evening, and with music to row upon the waters, which Plutarch so much applauds, Elian admires upon the river Pineus, in those Thessalian fields, beset with green bays, where birds so sweetly sing that passengers, enchanted as it were with their heavenly music, *omnium laborum et curarum obliviscantur*, forget forthwith all labours,

care and grief — or in a *Gundilo* through the grand *Canale* in Venice, to see those goodly palaces, must needs refresh and give content to a melancholy dull spirit.

Anatomy of Melancholy; Democritus to the Reader.
II, sect. 2, memb. 4.

THOMAS HOBBES
1588–1679

THE PAPACY

From the time that the Bishop of Rome had gotten to be acknowledged for bishop universal by pretence of succession to St. Peter, their whole hierarchy or kingdom of darkness may be compared not unfitly to the kingdom of fairies, that is to the old wives' fables in England concerning ghosts and spirits and the feats they play in the night. And if a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof.

Leviathan, chap. xlvii.

IZAAK WALTON
1593–1683

THE BIRDS

NAY more, the very birds of the air, those that be not Hawks, are both so many and so useful and pleasant to mankind, that I must not let them pass without some observations. Thy both feed and refresh him; feed him with their choice bodies, and refresh him with their heavenly voices. I will not undertake to mention the several kinds of Fowl by which this is done, and his curious palate pleased by day, and which with their very excrements afford him a soft lodging at night. These I will pass by, but not those little nimble musicians of the air, that warble forth their curious ditties, with which nature hath furnished them to the shame of art.

As first the Lark, when she means to rejoice, to cheer herself and those that hear her; she then quits the earth, and sings as she ascends higher into the air, and having ended her heavenly employment, grows then mute, and sad to think that she must descend to the dull earth, which she would not touch, but for necessity.

How do the Blackbird and Thrassle, with their melodious voices, bid welcome to the cheerful Spring, and in their fixed months warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to!

Nay, the smaller birds also do the like in their particular seasons, as namely the Laverock, the Tit-lark,

and the little Linnet, and the honest Robin, that loves mankind both alive and dead.

But the Nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, "Lord, what music hast thou provided for the Saints in Heaven, when thou affordest bad men such music on earth!"

The Compleat Angler, I, chap. i.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE
1605–1682

CONTEMPT OF DEATH

I HAVE so abject a conceit of this common way of existence, this retaining to the Sun and Elements, I cannot think this to be a man, or to live according to the dignity of humanity: in expectation of a better, I can with patience embrace this life, yet in my best meditations do often defy Death: I honour any man that contemns it, nor can I highly love any that is afraid of it: this makes me naturally love a Soldier, and honour those tattered and contemptible Regiments, that will die at the command of a Sergeant.

Religio Medici, I, sect.38.

THE WORLD

I DO not envy the temper of crows and daws, nor the numerous and weary days of our fathers before the Flood. If there be any truth in Astrology, I may outlive a Jubilee: as yet I have not seen one revolution of Saturn, nor hath my pulse beat thirty years, and yet excepting one, have seen the ashes and left underground all the Kings of Europe; have been contemporary to three Emperors, four Grand Signiours, and as many Popes: methinks I have outlived myself, and begin to be weary of the sun; I have shaken hands with delight in my warm blood and canicular days; I perceive I do anticipate the vices of age, the world to me is but a dream or mock-show, and we all therein but pantaloons and antics, to my severer contemplations. *Ibid.*, 41.

THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

It is my temper, and I like it the better, to affect all harmony; and sure there is music even in the beauty, and the silent note which Cupid strikes, far sweeter than the sound of an instrument. For there is Music where ever there is a Harmony, order, or proportion; and thus far we may maintain the Music of the Spheres: for those well ordered motions and regular paces, though they give no sound unto the ear, yet to the understanding they strike a note most full of harmony. Whatsoever is harmonically composed delights in harmony; which makes me much distrust the symmetry of those heads which declaim against all Church Music. For myself, not only from my obedience, but my particular genius, I do embrace it: for even that vulgar and Tavern Music, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of Devotion, and a profound contemplation of the First Composer; there is something in it of divinity more than the ear discovers: it is an hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world, and creatures of God — such a melody to the ear, as the whole world, well understood, would afford the understanding. In brief, it is a sensible fit of that harmony which intellectually sounds in the ears of God.

Religio Medici, II, 9.

THE MIRACLE

Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable; for the world, I count it not an Inn, but an Hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I re-

gard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on: for the other, I use it but like my Globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my Altitude, for I am above Atlas his shoulders. The earth is a point, not only in respect of the Heavens above us, but of that Heavenly and Celestial part within us: that mass of flesh that circumscribes me, limits not my mind; that surface that tells the Heavens it hath an end, cannot persuade me I have any; I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty; though the number of the arc do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind; whilst I study to find how I am a Microcosm or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of Divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the Sun.

Religio Medici, II, 11.

ADAM AND EVE AFTER THE FALL

Being thus deluded before the Fall, it is no wonder if their conceptions were deceitful, and could scarce speak without an error after. For, what is very remarkable (and no man that I know hath yet observed) in the relations of Scripture before the Flood, there is but one speech delivered by man, wherein there is not an erronious conception; and, strictly examined, most hainously injurious unto truth. The pen of Moses is brief in the account before the Flood, and the speeches recorded are but six. The first is that of Adam, when upon the expostulation of God, he replied, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and because I was naked I hid myself." In which reply there

was included a very gross mistake, and, if with pertinacity maintained, a high and capital error. For thinking by this retirement to obscure himself from God, he infringed the Omnisciency and essential ubiquity of his Maker, who, as he created all things, so is he beyond and in them all; not only in power, as under his subjection, or in his presence, as being in his cognition, but in his very essence, as being the soul of their causalities, and the essential cause of their existencies. Certainly his posterity at this distance, and after so perpetuated an impairment, cannot but condemn the poverty of his conception, that thought to obscure himself from his Creator in the shade of the Garden, who had beheld him before in the darkness of his Chaos, and the great obscurity of Nothing; that thought to fly from God which could not fly himself; or imagined that one tree should conceal his nakedness from God's eye, as another has revealed it unto his own. Those tormented spirits that wish the mountains to cover them, have fallen upon desires of minor absurdity, and chosen ways of less improbable concealment. Though this be also as ridiculous unto reason as fruitless unto their desires; for he that laid the foundations of the earth, cannot be excluded the secrecy of the mountains, nor can there anything escape the perspicacity of those eyes, which were before light, and in whose optics there is no opacity.

Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors, I, ii.

IMMORTALITY

HAPPY are they which live not in that disadvantage of time, when men could say little for futurity, but from reason: whereby the noblest minds fell often upon doubtful deaths, and melancholy dissolutions. With

these hopes, Socrates warmed his doubtful spirits against that cold potion; and Cato, before he durst give the fatal stroke, spent part of the night in reading the Immortality of Plato, thereby confirming his wavering hand unto the animosity of that attempt.

Urn Burial, iv.

DEAD BONES

Now since these dead bones have already out-lasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard underground, and thin walls of clay, outworn all the strong and spacious buildings above it, and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests; what Prince can promise such diuturnity unto his reliques, or might not gladly say

Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim?

Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments. *Ibid.*, v.

TOO LATE

WHAT song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with Princes and Counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above Antiquarism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial Guardians, or Tutelary Observators. Had they made as good provision for their names, as they have done for their Reliques, they had not so grossly erred in the

art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and only arise unto late posterity as emblems of mortal vanities; antidotes against pride, vainglory, and madding vices. Pagan vainglories, which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and finding no Atropos unto the immortality of their names were never damped with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vainglories, who, acting early and before the probable meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs; whereby the ancient heroes have already outlasted their monuments and mechanical preservations. But in this latter scene of time we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias, and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector.

And therefore restless inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names, as some have done in their persons; one face of Janus holds no proportion unto the other. 'T is too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. *Urn Burial*, v.

OBLIVION

But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without

distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it; Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations; and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of Time? Without the favour of the everlasting Register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired; the greater part must be content to be as though they had not been; to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the Equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic, which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the Lucina of life, and even Pagans could doubt whether thus to live were to die; since our longest sun sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness and have our light in ashes; since the brother of Death daily haunts us with dying Mementoes, and Time that grows old itself bids us hope no long duration, diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darkness and light divide the course of Time, and

oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities, miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days. . . .

In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the Moon. . . . But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

Urn Burial.

CHRISTIAN IMMORTALITY

Pyramids, arches, obelisks, were but the irregularities of vainglory, and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian Religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in angles of contingency.

Pious spirits who passed their days in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world than the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the chaos of pre-ordination and night of their forebeings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstacies, exolu-

tion, liquefaction, transformation, the kiss of the Spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of Heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live indeed is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 't is all one to lie in St. Innocent's Churchyard, as in the sands of Egypt, ready to be anything, in the ecstacy of being ever, and as content with six foot as with the *moles* of Adrianus.

Urn Burial.

NIGHT

But the Quincunx of Heaven runs low, and 't is time to close the five ports of knowledge. We are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into phantasms of sleep, which often continueth precogitations, making cables of cobwebs, and wildernesses of handsome groves. Beside, Hippocrates hath spoke so little, and the oneirocritical masters have left such frigid interpretations from plants, that there is little encouragement to dream of Paradise itself. Nor will the sweetest delight of gardens afford much comfort in sleep, wherein the dulness of that sense shakes hands with delectable odours, and though in the bed of Cleopatra, can hardly with any delight raise up the ghost of a Rose.

Night, which pagan theology could make the

daughter of Chaos, affords no advantage to the description of order, although no lower than that mass can we derive its genealogy. All things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again, according to the Ordainer of order and mystical mathematics of the City of Heaven.

Though Somnus in Homer be sent to rouse up Agamemnon, I find no such effects in these drowsy approaches of sleep. To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our Antipodes. The huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia.

The Garden of Cyrus, v.

ASTROLOGY

Burden not the back of Aries, Leo, or Taurus with thy faults; nor make Saturn, Mars, or Venus guilty of thy follies. Think not to fasten thy imperfections on the Stars, and so despairingly conceive thyself under a fatality of being evil. Calculate thyself within; seek not thyself in the Moon, but in thine own orb or microcosmical circumference. Let celestial aspects admonish and advertise, not conclude and determine thy ways. For since good and bad stars moralize not our actions, and neither excuse or commend, acquit or condemn our good or bad deeds at the present or last bar; since some are astrologically well-disposed, who are morally highly vicious; not celestial figures, but virtuous schemes, must denominate and state our actions. If we rightly understood the names whereby God calleth the stars; if we knew his name for the Dog Star, or by what appellation Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn obey his will; it might be a welcome accession unto astrology, which speaks great

things, and is fain to make use of appellations from Greek and Barbaric systems. Whatever influences, impulsions, or inclinations there may be from the lights above, it were a piece of wisdom to make one of those wise men who overrule their stars, and with their own militia contend with the host of heaven.

Christian Morals, III, vii.

SENTENCES

As for those wingy mysteries in Divinity, and airy subtilties in Religion, which have unhinged the brains of better heads, they never stretched the *pia mater* of mine; methinks there be not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith. . . . I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my Reason to an *O altitudo!*

Religio Medici, I, 9.

In Eternity there is no distinction of tenses, and therefore that terrible term Predestination, which hath troubled so many weak heads to conceive, and the wisest to explain, is in respect to God no pre-scious determination of our estates to come, but a definitive blast of his will already fulfilled, and at the instant that he first decreed it; for to his Eternity, which is indivisible and altogether, the last trump is already sounded, the reprobates in the flame, and the blessed in Abraham's bosom. *Ibid.*, 11.

There is all Africa and her prodigies in us.

Ibid., 15.

Men that look no farther than their outsides, think health an appurtenance unto life, and quarrel with

their constitutions for being sick; but I, that have examined the parts of man, and know upon what tender filaments that fabric hangs, do wonder that we are not always so; and considering the thousand doors that lead to death, do thank my God that we can die but once.

Religio Medici, I, 44.

CERTAINLY there is no happiness within this circle of flesh, nor is it in the optics of these eyes to behold felicity.

Ibid.

To me avarice seems not so much a vice, as a deplorable piece of madness; to conceive ourselves urinals, or be persuaded that we are dead, is not so ridiculous, nor so many degrees beyond the power of Hellebore, as this.

Ibid., II, 13.

THAT wherein God himself is happy, the holy Angels are happy, in whose defect the Devils are unhappy — that dare I call Happiness: whatsoever conduceth unto this, may with an easy metaphor deserve that name; whatsoever else the world terms Happiness, is to me a story out of Pliny, an apparition, or neat delusion, wherein there is no more of happiness than the name.

Ibid., II, 15.

WHEN the funeral pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu of their interred friends, little expecting that the curiosity of future ages should comment upon their ashes; and having

no old experience of the duration of their relics, held no opinion of such after-considerations.

Urn Burial, Epistle Dedicatory.

But these are sad and sepulchral pitchers, which have no joyful voices, silently expressing old mortality, the ruins of forgotten times.

Ibid.

Great examples grow thin, and to be fetched from the passed world. Simplicity flies away, and Iniquity comes at long strides upon us.

Ibid.

But whether that mournful burthen, and treble calling out after Absalom, had any reference unto the last conclamation and triple valediction used by other nations, we hold but a wavering conjecture.

Ibid., i.

With rich flames and hired tears they solemnized their obsequies, and in the most lamented monuments made one part of their inscriptions.

Ibid., iii.

Liquors not to be computed by years of annual magistrates, but by great conjunctions and the fatal periods of Kingdoms. *Ibid.*

To be knaved out of our graves, to have our skulls made drinking bowls, and our bones turned into pipes, to delight and sport our enemies, are tragical abominations, escaped in burning burials.

Ibid.

WHY the female ghosts appear unto Ulysses before the heroes and masculine spirits; why the *psyche* or soul of Tiresias is of the masculine gender, who being blind on earth, sees more than all the rest in Hell; why the funeral suppers consisted of eggs, beans, smallage, and lettuce, since the dead are made to eat asphodels about the Elysian meadows; why since there is no sacrifice acceptable, nor any propitiation for the covenant of the Grave, men set up the deity of Morta, and fruitlessly adored Divinities without ears; it cannot escape some doubt.

Urn Burial, Epistle Dedicatory, iv.

MEANWHILE Epicurus lies deep in Dante's Hell, wherein we meet with tombs enclosing souls which denied their immortalities. But whether the virtuous Heathen, who lived better than he spoke, or, erring in the principles of himself, yet lived above philosophers of more spacious maxims, lie so deep as he is placed . . . were a query too sad to insist on.

Ibid.

IT is the heaviest stone that Melancholy can throw at a man, to tell him he is at the end of his nature.

Ibid.

ADVERSITY stretcheth out our days, misery makes Alcmena's nights, and Time hath no wings unto it.

Religio Medici, v.

THERE is a certain list of vices committed in all ages, and declaimed against by all authors, which will last as long as human nature; which, digested into com-

monplaces, may serve for any theme, and never be out of date until Doomsday.

Vulgar Errors, I, vi.

He was now past the healthful dreams of the sun, moon, and stars, in their clarity and proper courses. 'T was too late to dream of flying, of limpid fountains, smooth waters, white vestments, and fruitful green trees, which are the visions of healthful sleeps, and at good distance from the grave.

Letter to a Friend.

Could the world unite in the practice of that despised train of virtues, which the divine ethics of our Saviour hath so inculcated upon us, the furious face of things must disappear; Eden would be yet to be found, and the Angels might look down, not with pity, but joy upon us.

Christian Morals, I, xix.

As charity covers, so modesty preventeth a multitude of sins; withholding from noon-day vices, and brazen-browed iniquities, from sinning on the house-tops, and painting our follies with the rays of the sun.

Ibid., xxxv.

JOHN MILTON
1608–1674

HIS MISSION

SURELY to every good and peaceable man, it must in nature needs be a hateful thing to be the displeaser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him doubtless to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own true happiness. But when God commands to take the trumpet and blow a dolorous or a jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say, or what he shall conceal. . . .

For me, I have determined to lay up as the best treasure, and solace of a good old age, if God vouchsafe it me, the honest liberty of free speech from my youth, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the Church's good. For if I be, either by disposition or what other cause, too inquisitive, or suspicious of myself and mine own doings, who can help it? But this I foresee, that should the Church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have given me ability the while to reason against that man that should be the author of so foul a deed; or should she, by blessing from above on the industry and courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days, without the least furtherance or contribution of those few talents, which God at that present had lent me; I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discourage

and reproach. Timorous and ingrateful, the church of God is now again at the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou bewailest. What matters it for thee, or thy bewailing? When time was, thou couldest not find a syllable of all that thou hast read or studied, to utter in her behalf. Yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired thoughts, out of the sweat of other men. Thou hadst the diligence, the parts, the language of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified; but when the cause of God and his Church was to be pleaded, for which purpose that tongue was given thee which thou hast, God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants, but thou wert dumb as a beast; from henceforward be that which thine own brutish silence hath made thee. Or else I should have heard on the other ear: Slothful, and ever to be set light by, the Church hath now overcome her late distresses, after the unwearied labours of many her true servants that stood up in her defence; thou also wouldst take upon thee to share amongst them of their joy: but wherefore thou? Where canst thou show any word or deed of thine which might have hastened her peace? Whatever thou dost now talk, or write, or look, is the alms of other men's active prudence and zeal. Dare not now to say or do anything better than thy former sloth and infancy; or if thou darest, thou dost impudently to make a thrifty purchase of boldness to thyself, out of the painful merits of other men; what before was thy sin is now thy duty, to be abject and worthless. These and such-like lessons as these, I know would have been my matins daily, and my evensong.

The Reason of Church Government urg'd against Prelatry, Book II.

THE POET

For although a poet, soaring in the high region of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him, might, without apology, speak more of himself than I mean to do; yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empyreal conceit, to venture and divulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me. I must say, therefore, that after I had for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense) been exercised to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers, both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether aught was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice in English, or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live. But much latelier, in the private academies of Italy, whither I was favoured to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabout (for the manner is, that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there), met with acceptance above what was looked for; and other things, which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps; I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study (which I take to be

my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die. . . .

Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting; whether that epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, or those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief model; . . . or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation. . . . Or if occasion shall lead, to imitate those magnific odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matters most an end faulty. But those frequent songs throughout the Law and Prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power, beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high Providence in his Church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs

of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called Fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe. . . .

Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren Daughters; but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases: to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed at mine own peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loath to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.

The Reason of Church Government urg'd against Prelatry, Book II.

A TRUE POEM

And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.

Apology for Smectymnuus.

BOOKS

For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills Reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'T is true, no age can restore a life, whereof, perhaps, there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against

the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of Reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life. *Areopagitica.*

TRUE VIRTUE

He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser (whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas), describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain. *Ibid.*

ENGLAND

LORDS and Commons of England! consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtile and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. . . . Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself; what does he then but reveal himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen? I say, as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching Reformation; others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.

What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies?

We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks; had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already.

Areopagitica.

PRESAGE OF VICTORY

When a city shall be as it were besieged and blocked about, her navigable river infested, inroads and incursions round, defiance and battle oft rumoured to be marching up, even to her walls and suburb trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, even to a rarity and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of, argues first a singular good will, contentedness, and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itself to a gallant bravery and well-grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was who, when Rome was nigh besieged by Hannibal, being in the city, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate whereon Hannibal himself encamped his own regiment.

Next, it is a lively and cheerful presage of our happy success and victory. For as in a body when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rational faculties, and those in the acutest and the pertest operations of wit and subtlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is; so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare,

and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy and new invention, it betokens us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs, and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue, destined to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

Areopagitica.

EDUCATION

But here the main skill and groundwork will be, to temper them such lectures and explanations upon every opportunity, as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, inflamed with the study of learning and the admiration of virtue; stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men, and worthy patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages. That they may despise and scorn all their childish and ill-taught qualities, to delight in manly and liberal exercises: which he who hath the art and proper eloquence to catch them with, what with mild and effectual persuasions, and what with the intimation of some fear, if need be, but chiefly by his own example, might in

a short space gain them to an incredible diligence and courage, infusing into their young breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardour, as would not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men. . . .

The interim of unsweating themselves regularly, and convenient rest before meat, may both with profit and delight be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music, heard or learnt; either while the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices, either to religious, martial, or civil ditties; which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions. . . .

Besides these constant exercises at home, there is another opportunity of gaining experience to be won from pleasure itself abroad; in those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature, not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with Heaven and Earth.

Of Education.

A PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

O Sir, I do now feel myself inwrapt on the sudden into these mazes and labyrinths of dreadful and hideous thoughts, that which way to get out, or which way to end, I know not, unless I turn mine eyes, and

with your help lift up my hands to that eternal and propitious Throne, where nothing is readier than grace and refuge to the distresses of mortal suppliants: and it were a shame to leave these serious thoughts less piously than the Heathen were wont to conclude their graver discourses.

Thou therefore that sittest in light and glory unapproachable, Parent of Angels and men! next Thee I implore, omnipotent King, Redeemer of that lost remnant whose nature thou did'st assume, ineffable and everlasting Love! . . . Look upon this thy poor and almost spent and expiring Church; leave her not thus a prey to these importunate wolves, that wait and think long till they devour thy faithful flock; these wild boars that have broke into thy vineyard, and left the print of their polluting hoofs on the souls of thy servants. Oh let them not bring about their damned designs, that stand now at the entrance of the bottomless pit, expecting the watchword to open and let out those dreadful locusts and scorpions, to re-involve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness, where we shall never more see the sun of thy Truth again, never hope for the cheerful dawn, never more hear the Bird of Morning sing.

Of Reformation in England, Book II.

JEREMY TAYLOR
1613–1667

THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

He that stands in a churchyard in the time of a great plague, and hears the passing-bell perpetually telling the sad stories of death, and sees crowds of infected bodies pressing to their graves, and others sick and tremulous, and Death dressed up in all the images of sorrow round about him, is not supported in his spirit by the variety of his sorrow; and at Doomsday, when the terrors are universal, besides that it is in itself so much greater, because it can affright the whole world, it is also made greater by communication and a sorrowful influence; grief being then strongly infectious, when there is no variety of state, but an entire kingdom of fear; and amazement is the king of all our passions, and all the world its subjects: and that shriek must needs be terrible when millions of men and women at the same instant shall fearfully cry out, and the noise shall mingle with the trumpet of the Archangel, with the thunders of the dying and groaning heavens and the crack of the dissolving world, when the whole fabric of nature shall shake into dissolution and eternal ashes.

Sermon, Christ's Advent to Judgement.

PRAYER

Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our

tempest; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts, it is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the outquarters of an army, and chooses a frontier-garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and unconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below.

Sermon, The Return of Prayers.

RINGS AND SEALS

We long for perishing meat, and fill our stomachs with corruption; we look after white and red, and the weaker beauties of the night; we are passionate after rings and seals, and enraged at the breaking of a crystal; we delight in the society of fools and weak persons; we laugh at sin, and contrive mischiefs; and the body rebels against the soul and carries the cause against all its just pretences; and our soul itself is,

above half of it, earth and stone in its affections and distempers; our hearts are hard and inflexible to the softer whispers of mercy and compassion, having no loves for anything but strange flesh and heaps of money and popular noises, for misery and folly; and therefore we are a huge way off from the Kingdom of God, whose excellencies, whose designs, whose ends, whose constitution is spiritual and holy and separate and sublime and perfect.

Sermon, Of Luke-warmness and Zeal.

WANDERING THOUGHTS

However it be very easy to have our thoughts wander, yet it is our indifferency and lukewarmness that makes it so natural: and you may observe it, that so long as the light shines bright, and the fires of devotion and desire flame out, so long the mind of a man stands close to the altar and waits upon the sacrifice; but as the fires die, and desires decay, so the mind steals away, and walks abroad to see the little images of beauty and pleasure, which it beholds in the falling stars and little glow-worms of the world.

Ibid.

THE STARS

Religion is worth as much to-day as it was yesterday, and that cannot change, though we do; and if we do we have left God; and whither he can go that goes from God, his own sorrows will soon enough instruct him. This fire must never go out, but it must be like the fire of Heaven; it must shine like the Stars, though sometimes covered with a cloud, or obscured by a greater light; yet they dwell for ever in their orbs, and walk in their circles, and observe their cir-

cumstances, but go not out by day nor night, and set not when kings die, nor are extinguished when nations change their government.

Sermon, Of Luke-warmness and Zeal.

CHILDREN

No man can tell but he that loves his children, how many delicious accents make a man's heart dance in the pretty conversation of those dear pledges: their childishness, their stammering, their little angers, their innocence, their imperfections, their necessities are so many little emanations of joy and comfort to him that delights in their persons and society; but he that loves not his wife and children, feeds a lioness at home, and broods a nest of sorrow.

Sermon, The Marriage Ring.

INTEMPERANCE

As temperance begins to go away, having done the ministries of nature, every morsel, and every new goblet, is still less delicious, and cannot be endured but as men force nature by violence to stay longer than she would. How have some men rejoiced when they have escaped a cup! And when they cannot escape, they pour it in, and receive it with as much pleasure as the old women have in the Lapland dances — they dance the round, but there is a horror and a harshness in the music.

Sermon, Apples of Sodom.

THE SUN IN WINTER

But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death and the colder breath of the North; and then the waters

break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; and the flies do rise again from their little graves in walls, and dance awhile in the air, to tell that there is joy within, and that the great mother of creatures will open the stock of her new refreshment, become useful to mankind, and sing praises to her Redeemer.

Sermon, The Duties of the Tongue.

ENJOYMENT

I CONSIDER that he that is the greatest possessor in the world, enjoys its best and most noble parts, and those which are of most excellent perfection, but in common with the inferior persons, and the most despicable of his kingdom. Can the greatest prince enclose the sun, and set one little star in his cabinet for his own use, or secure to himself the gentle and benign influence of any one constellation? Are not his subjects' fields bedewed with the same showers that water his gardens of pleasure? . . .

The poorest artisan of Rome, walking in Cæsar's gardens, had the same pleasures which they ministered to their Lord: and although it may be, he was put to gather fruits to eat from another place, yet his other senses were delighted equally with Cæsar's: the birds made him as good music, the flowers gave him as sweet smells; he there sucked as good air, and delighted in the beauty and order of the place, for the same reason and upon the same perception as the prince himself, save only that Cæsar paid for all that pleasure vast sums of money, the blood and treasure of a province, which the poor man had for nothing.

Suppose a man lord of all the whole world (for

still we are but in supposition), yet since everything is received, not according to its own greatness and worth, but according to the capacity of the receiver, it signifies very little as to our content, or to the riches of our possession. . . . He to whom the world can be given to any purpose greater than a private estate can minister, must have new capacities created in him: he needs the understanding of an angel to take the accounts of his estate; he had need have a stomach like fire or the grave, for else he can eat no more than one of his healthful subjects: and unless he hath an eye like the sun, and a motion like that of a thought, and a bulk as big as one of the orbs of heaven, the pleasures of his eye can be no greater than to behold the beauty of a little prospect from a hill, or to look upon the heap of gold packed up in a little room, or to dote upon a cabinet of jewels — better than which there is no man that sees at all but sees every day. For not to name the beauties and sparkling diamonds of heaven, a man's or a woman's or a hawk's eye is more beauteous and excellent than all the jewels of his crown.

Sermon, The Foolish Exchange.

THE SOUL

If we consider what the soul is in its own capacity to happiness, we shall find it to be an excellency greater than the sun, of an angelical substance, sister to a cherubin, an image of the Divinity, and the great argument of that mercy whereby God did distinguish us from the lower form of beasts, and trees, and minerals. . . .

But the soul is all that whereby we may be, and

without which we cannot be, happy. It is not the eye that sees the beauties of the heaven, nor the ear that hears the sweetnesses of music, or the glad tidings of a prosperous accident, but the soul that perceives all the relishes of sensual and intellectual perfections; and the more noble and excellent the soul is, the greater and more savoury are its perceptions. And, if a child beholds the rich ermine, or the diamonds of a starry night, or the order of the world, or hears the discourses of an Apostle; because he makes no reflex acts upon himself, and sees not that he sees, he can have but the pleasure of a fool, or the deliciousness of a mule. But, although the reflection of its own acts be a rare instrument of pleasure or pain respectively, yet the soul's excellency is, upon the same reason, not perceived by us, by which the sapidness of pleasant things of nature are not understood by a child; even because the soul cannot reflect far enough. For as the sun, which is the fountain of light and heat, makes violent and direct emissions of his rays from himself, but reflects them no further than to the bottom of a cloud, or the lowest imaginary circle of the middle region, and, therefore, receives [not] a duplicate of his own heat; so is the soul of man; it reflects upon its own inferior action of particular sense, or general understanding; but, because it knows little of its own nature, the manners of volition, the immediate instruments of understanding, the way how it comes to meditate; and cannot discern how a sudden thought arrives, or the solution of a doubt not depending upon preceding premises; therefore, above half its pleasures are abated, and its own worth less understood; and possibly, it is the better it is so. If the elephant knew his strength, or

the horse the vigorousness of his own spirit, they would be as rebellious against their rulers as unreasonable men against government: nay, the angels themselves, because their light reflected home to their orbs, and they understood all the secrets of their own perfection, they grew vertiginous, and fell from the battlements of heaven. But the excellency of the human soul shall then be truly understood, when the reflection will make no distraction of our faculties, nor enkindle any irregular fires; when we may understand ourselves without danger.

Sermon, The Foolish Exchange, ii.

THE WICKED MAN

A WICKED man does know that good is lovely, and sin is of an evil and destructive nature; and when he is reproved, he is convinced; and when he is observed, he is ashamed; and when he has done, he is unsatisfied, and when he pursues his sin, he does it in the dark: tell him he shall die, and he sighs deeply, but he knows it as well as you; proceed, and say that after death comes Judgement, and the poor man believes and trembles; he knows that God is angry with him; and if you tell him that for aught he knows, he may be in Hell to-morrow, he knows that it is an intolerable truth, but it is also undeniable. And yet, after this, he runs to commit his sin with as certain an event and resolution as if he knew no argument against it; these notices of things terrible and true pass through his understanding as an eagle through the air; as long as her flight lasted the air was shaken, but there remains no path behind her.

A Sermon Preached to the University of Dublin.

DEFENCELESSNESS

THERE is in nature nothing so contemptible, but it may meet with us in such circumstances, that it may be too hard for us in our weaknesses; and the sting of a bee is a weapon sharp enough to pierce the finger of a child or the lip of a man; and those creatures which nature hath left without weapons, yet they are armed sufficiently to vex those parts of men which are left defenceless and obnoxious to a sunbeam, to the roughness of a sour grape, to the unevenness of a gravel-stone, to the dust of a wheel, or the unwholesome breath of a star looking awry upon a sinner.

Funeral Sermon, for the Countess of Carbery.

A PRAYER

A PRAYER FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, TO BE SAID BY VIRGINS AND WIDOWS, PROFESSED OR RESOLVED SO TO LIVE; AND MAY BE USED BY ANY OTHER

O HOLY and purest Jesus, who wert pleased to espouse every holy soul, and join it to Thee with a holy union and mysterious instruments of religious society and communications; O fill my soul with religion and desires holy as the thoughts of Cherubim, passionate beyond the love of women, that I may love Thee as much as ever any creature loved Thee, even with all my soul and all my faculties, and all the degrees of every faculty. Let me know no loves but those of duty and charity, obedience and devotion, that I may for ever run after Thee, who art the King of Virgins, and with whom whole kingdoms are in love, and for whose sake queens have died, and at whose feet kings with joy have laid their crowns and sceptres.

Holy Living, II, vi.

THE ROSE

BUT so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness and decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces.

Holy Dying, I, ii.

THE SUN

BUT as when the Sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brows of Moses when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still while a man tells the story the Sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light; and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly: so is a man's reason and his life.

Ibid., I, iii.

SICKNESS

THE soul by the help of sickness knocks off the fetters of pride and vainer complacencies. Then she draws the

curtains and stops the light from coming in, and takes the pictures down, those fantastic images of self-love, and gay remembrances of vain opinion and popular noises. Then the spirit stoops into the sobrieties of humble thoughts, and feels corruption chiding the forwardness of fancy, and allaying the vapour of conceit and factious opinions. For humility is the soul's grave, into which she enters, not to die, but to meditate and inter some of its troublesome appendages. There she sees the dust, and feels the dishonours of the body, and reads the register of all its sad adherencies; and then she lays by all her vain reflections, beating upon her crystal and pure mirror from the fancies of strength and beauty, and little decayed prettinesses of the body.

Holy Dying, III, vi, 2.

THE NORTH WIND

For so have I known the boisterous North wind pass through the yielding air, which opened its bosom, and appeased its violence by entertaining it with easy compliance in all the regions of its receptions. But when the same breath of heaven hath been checked with the stiffness of a tower, or the united strength of a wood, it grew mighty and dwelt there, and made the highest branches stoop and make a smooth path for it on the top of all its glories.

Ibid., III, vi, 6.

AVOIDING DEATH

We are so softened and made effeminate with delicate thoughts, and meditations of ease, and brutish satisfactions, that if our death comes before we have

seized upon a great fortune, or enjoy the promises of the fortune-tellers, we esteem ourselves to be robbed of our goods, to be mocked and miserable. Hence it comes that men are impatient of the thoughts of death; hence come those arts of protraction and delaying the significations of old age; thinking to deceive the world, men cozen themselves, and by representing themselves youthful, they certainly continue their vanity, till Proserpina pull the peruke from their heads. We cannot deceive God and nature, for a coffin is a coffin, though it be covered with a pompous veil; and the minutes of our time strike on and are counted by Angels, till the period comes which must cause the passing-bell to give warning to all the neighbours that thou art dead, and they must be so; and nothing can excuse or retard this. And if our death could be put off a little longer, what advantage can it be in thy accounts of nature or felicity? They that three thousand years agone died unwillingly, and stopped death two days, or stayed it a week, what is their gain? *where is that week?* And poor-spirited men use arts of protraction and make their persons pitiable, but their condition contemptible, being like the poor sinners at Noah's flood: the waters drove them out of their lower rooms; then they crept up to the roof, having lasted half a day longer; and then they knew not how to get down; some crept upon the top branch of a tree, and some climbed up to a mountain, and stayed it may be three days longer. But all that while they endured a worse torment than death; they lived with amazement, and were distracted with the ruins of mankind, and the horror of an universal deluge.

Holy Dying, III, vii.

DEATH

TAKE away but the pomps of death, the disguises and solemn bugbears, the tinsel, and the actings by candle-light, and proper and fantastic ceremonies, the minstrels and the noise-makers, the women and the weepers, the swoonings and the shriekings, the nurses and the physicians, the dark room and the ministers, the kindred and the watchers; and then to die is easy, ready, and quitted from its troublesome circumstances. It is the same harmless thing that a poor shepherd suffered yesterday, or a maid-servant to-day.

Holy Dying, III, vii, 4.

FRIENDSHIP

FRIENDSHIP is equal to all the world, and of itself hath no difference; but it is differenced only by accidents, and by the capacity or incapacity of them that receive it. . . . For thus the Sun is the eye of the world; and he is indifferent to the Negro, or the cold Russian, to them that dwell under the line, and them that stand near the Tropics, the scalded Indian, or the poor boy that shakes at the foot of the Riphean hills; but the fluxures of the heaven and the earth, the conveniency of abode, and the approaches to the North and South respectively change the emanations of his beams; not that they do not pass always from him, but they are not equally received below, but by periods and changes, by little inlets and reflections, they receive what they can. And some have only a dark day and a long night from him, snows and white cattle, a miserable life, and a perpetual harvest of catarrhs and consumptions, apoplexies and

dead palsies. But some have splendid fires, and aromatic spices, rich wines and well digested fruits, great wit and great courage, because they dwell in his eye, and look in his face, and are the courtiers of the Sun, and wait upon him in his chambers of the East. *Of Friendship.*

SENTENCES

ALTHOUGH he came not in the spirit of Elias, but with meekness and gentle insinuations, soft as the breath of heaven, not willing to disturb the softest stalk of a violet, yet his second coming shall be terrors, such as shall amaze all the world, and dissolve it into ruin and a chaos.

Of Godly Fear, i.

MUCH safer is it to go to the severities of a watchful and a sober life; for all that time of life is lost, when wine and rage and pleasure and folly steal away the heart of a man, and make him go singing to his grave.

The House of Feasting, ii.

THE pleasure is supported by little things, by the experience of fools and them that observed nothing, and the relishes tasted by artificial appetites; by art and cost, by violence and preternatural desires, by the advantage of deception and evil habits, by expectations and delays, by dreams and in considerations. These are the harlots' hands that build the fairy castle.

Apples of Sodom, i.

THE tongue of a babbler may crush a man's bones, or break his fortune upon her own wheel; and whatever

the effect be, yet of itself it is the betraying of a trust, and, by reproach, often times passes on to intolerable calamities, like a criminal to his scaffold through the execrable gates of cities.

The Good and Evil Tongue, ii.

THERE is no blessed soul goes to heaven, but he makes a general joy in all the mansions where the Saints do dwell, in all the chapels where the Angels sing. *Of Christian Prudence.*

FOR so have I seen an amorous person tell the minutes of his absence from his fancied joy; and while he told the sands of his hour-glass, or the throbs and little beatings of his watch, by dividing an hour into so many members, he spun out its length by number, and so translated a day into the tediousness of a month. *Holy Dying*, I, iii, 2.

IT must needs be that such a man must die when he ought to die, and be like a ripe and pleasant fruit falling from a fair tree, and gathered into baskets for the planter's use. *Ibid.*, I, iii, 3.

THE harmony that is made by an herd of evening wolves, when they miss their draught of blood in their midnight revels.

Ibid., I, v, 2.

A BROTHER, if he be worthy, is the readiest and nearest to be a friend; but till he be so, he is but the twilight of the day, and but the blossom to the fairest fruit of Paradise.

Of Friendship.

ROBERT SOUTH
1634–1716

WORDS OF SOBERNESS

"I SPEAK the words of Soberness," said St. Paul (Acts xxvi, 25), and "I preach the Gospel not with the enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Cor. ii, 4). This was the way of the Apostles discoursing of things sacred. Nothing here "of the fringes of the North-star"; nothing of "Nature's becoming unnatural"; nothing of the "down of Angels' wings," or "the beautiful locks of Cherubim"; no starched similitudes, introduced with a "Thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion," and the like. No, these were sublimities above the rise of the apostolic spirit. For the Apostles, poor mortals, were content to take lower steps, and to tell the world in plain terms "that he who believed should be saved, and that he who believed not should be damned." And this was the dialect which pierced the conscience, and made the hearers cry out, "Men and brethen, what shall we do?" It tickled not the ear, but sunk into the heart; and when men came from such sermons, they never commended the preacher for his taking voice or gesture; for the fineness of such a simile, or the quaintness of such sentence; but they spoke like men conquered with the overpowering force and evidence of the most *concerning* truths; much in the words of the two disciples going to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He opened to us the scriptures?"

Sermon preached at Christ Church, Oxon, April 30, 1668.

ABRAHAM COWLEY
1618–1667

CHIMES OF VERSE

I BELIEVE I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head first with such chimes of verse, as have never since left ringing there; for I remember, when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion) but there was wont to lie Spenser's works. This I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses, which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this) and by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers; so that, I think, I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet.

Essays: Of Myself.

THE MARQUIS OF HALIFAX
1633–1695

THE ENGLISHMAN'S IDOLATRY

Our *Trimmer* is far from Idolatry in other things, in one thing only he cometh near it, his Country in some degree is his Idol; he doth not worship the Sun because 't is not peculiar to us, it rambles about the World, and is less kind to us than others; but for the earth of England, though perhaps inferior to that of many places abroad, to him there is divinity in it, and he would rather die than see a spire of English grass trampled down by a foreign trespasser. He thinketh there are a great many of his mind, for all plants are apt to taste of the soil in which they grow; and we that grow here, have a root that produceth in us a stalk of English juice, which is not to be changed by grafting or foreign infusion.

The Character of a Trimmer.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE
1628–1699

LIFE

When all is done, humane life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet, till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.

Essays: Of Poetry.

THOMAS TRAHERNE
1637–1674

CHILDHOOD

The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold; the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees, when I saw them first through one of the gates, transported and ravished me: their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstacy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal Cherubim! And young men glittering and sparkling Angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls, tumbling in the street and playing, were moving jewels. I knew not that they were born or should die; but all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the light of the day, and something infinite behind everything appeared, which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in Heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine, their clothes and gold and silver were mine, as much as their sparkling eyes, fair skins, and ruddy faces. The skies were mine, and so were the sun and moon and stars; and all the World was mine, and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it. I knew no churlish

proprieties nor bounds, nor divisions: but all proprieties and divisions were mine; all treasures and the possessors of them. So that with much ado I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of this world.

Centuries of Meditation, pp. 157–58.

JONATHAN SWIFT
1667–1745

THE DEVIL

And whereas the mind of man, when he gives the spur and bridle to his thoughts, doth never stop, but naturally sallies out into both extremes of high and low, of good and evil; his first flight of fancy commonly transports him to ideas of what is most perfect, finished, and exalted; till having soared out of his own reach and sight, not well perceiving how near the frontiers of height and depth border upon each other; with the same course and wing, he falls down plumb into the lowest bottom of things; like one who travels the east into the west; or like a straight line drawn by its own length into a circle. Whether a tincture of malice in our natures makes us fond of furnishing every bright idea with its reverse; or whether reason, reflecting upon the sum of things, can, like the sun, serve only to enlighten one half of the globe, leaving the other half by necessity under shade and darkness; or whether fancy, flying up to the imagination of what is highest and best, becomes overshot and spent and weary, and suddenly falls, like a dead Bird of Paradise to the ground; or whether, after all these metaphysical conjectures, I have not entirely missed the true reason; the proposition, however, which hath stood me in so much circumstance, is altogether true; that, as the most uncivilized parts of mankind have some way or other climbed up to the conception of a *God*, or supreme

power, so they have seldom forgot to provide their fears with certain ghastly notions, which, instead of better, have served them pretty tolerably for a *Devil*. And this proceeding seems to be natural enough; for it is with men, whose imaginations are lifted up very high, after the same rate, as with those, whose bodies are so; that, as they are delighted with the advantage of a nearer contemplation upwards, so they are equally terrified with the dismal prospect of the precipice below.

A Tale of a Tub, sect. viii.

DELUSION

How fading and insipid do all objects accost us that are not conveyed in the vehicle of delusion! How shrunk is everything as it appears in the glass of nature! so that if it were not for the assistance of artificial mediums, false lights, refracted angles, varnish and tinsel, there would be a mighty level in the felicity and enjoyments of mortal men. If this were seriously considered by the world, as I have a certain reason to suspect it hardly will, men would no longer reckon among their high points of wisdom the art of exposing weak sides, and publishing infirmities; an employment, in my opinion, neither better nor worse than that of unmasking, which I think has never been allowed fair usage, either in the world or the play-house.

In the proportion that credulity is a more peaceful possession of the mind than curiosity, so far preferable is that wisdom, which converses about the surface, to that pretended philosophy, which enters into the depth of things, and then comes gravely back, with informations and discoveries, that in the inside

they are good for nothing. The two senses, to which all objects first address themselves, are the sight and the touch; these never examine farther than the colour, the shape, the size, and whatever qualities dwell or are drawn by art upon the outward of bodies; and then comes reason officiously with tools for cutting, and opening, and mangling, and piercing; offering to demonstrate, that they are not of the same consistence quite through. Now I take all this to be the last degree of perverting nature; one of whose eternal laws it is, to put the best furniture forward. And therefore, in order to save the charges of all such expensive anatomy for the time to come, I do here think fit to inform the reader, that in such conclusions as these, reason is certainly in the right; and that in most corporeal beings which have fallen under my cognizance, the outside hath been infinitely preferable to the in; whereof I have been farther convinced from some late experiments. Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse.

Tale of a Tub, sect. ix.

JOSEPH ADDISON
1672–1719

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow: when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great Day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

Spectator, No. 26.

THE PETTICOAT

I consider woman as a beautiful romantic animal, that may be adorned with furs and feathers, pearls and diamonds, ores and silks. The lynx shall cast its skin at her feet to make her a tippet; the peacock, parrot, and swan shall pay contributions to her muff; the sea shall be searched for shells, and the rocks for gems; and every part of nature furnish out its share

towards the embellishment of a creature that is the most consummate work of it. All this I shall indulge them in; but as for the Petticoat I have been speaking of, I neither can nor will allow it.

Tatler, No. 116.

SAMUEL JOHNSON
1709–1784

THE DICTIONARY

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns, yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amid inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge, and co-operating diligence of the Italian academicians, did not secure them from the censure of Beni; if the embodied critics of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till

most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds; I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

LAURENCE STERNE
1713–1768

A FRAGMENT

THE town of Abdera, notwithstanding Democritus lived there, trying all the powers of irony and laughter to reclaim it, was the vilest and most profligate town in all Thrace. What for poisons, conspiracies, and assassinations — libels, pasquinades, and tumults, — there was no going there by day — 't was worse by night.

Now, when things were at the worst, it came to pass that, the Andromeda of Euripides being represented at Abdera, the whole orchestra was delighted with it; but of all the passages which delighted them, nothing operated more upon their imaginations than the tender strokes of nature which the poet had wrought up in that pathetic speech of Perseus, "O Cupid, prince of gods and men," etc. Every man almost spoke pure iambics the next day, and talked of nothing but Perseus his pathetic address — "O Cupid, prince of gods and men;" — in every street of Abdera, in every house —"O Cupid! Cupid!" — in every mouth, like the natural notes of some sweet melody which drops from it, whether it will or no, — nothing but "Cupid! Cupid! prince of gods and men." The fire caught, and the whole city, like the heart of one man, opened itself to Love.

No pharmacopolist could sell one grain of hellebore; not a single armourer had a heart to forge one instrument of death; Friendship and Virtue met to-

gether, and kissed each other in the street; the Golden Age returned, and hung over the town of Abdera; every Abderite took his oaten pipe, and every Abderitish woman left her purple web, and chastely sat her down, and listened to the song.

"'T was only in the power," says the fragment, "of the God whose empire extendeth from heaven to earth, and even to the depths of the sea, to have done this."

A Sentimental Journey.

DEATH OF LE FEVRE

A-WELL-A-DAY! — do what we can for him, said Trim, maintaining his point, — the poor soul will die — *He shall not die, by G—*, cried my uncle Toby.

The Accusing Spirit, which flew up to Heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in; — and the Recording Angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever.

Tristram Shandy, VI, viii.

EDMUND BURKE
1729–1797

MARIE ANTOINETTE

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in; glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what a heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of Chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations,

the nurse of manly sentiments and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

Reflections on the Revolution in France.

EDWARD GIBBON

1737–1794

ELAGABALUS BRINGS THE SACRED STONE TO ROME

In a solemn procession through the streets of Rome, the way was strewed with gold dust; the black stone, set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The pious Emperor held the reins, and, supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine Mount, the sacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumstance of cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics, were profusely consumed on his altar. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damsels performed their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music, whilst the gravest personages of the state and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions with affected zeal and secret indignation.

Decline and Fall, chap. vi.

IMMORTALITY

The writings of Cicero [1] represent in the most lively colours the ignorance, the errors, and the uncertainty

[1] In particular, the first book of the *Tusculan Questions* and the treatise *de Senectute*, and the *Somnium Scipionis*, contain, in the most beautiful language, every thing that Grecian philosophy, or Roman good sense could possibly suggest on this dark but important subject.

of the ancient philosophers with regard to the immortality of the soul. When they are desirous of arming their disciples against the fear of death, they inculcate, as an obvious, though melancholy position, that the fatal stroke of our dissolution releases us from the calamities of life; and that those can no longer suffer who no longer exist. Yet there were a few sages of Greece and Rome who had conceived a more exalted, and, in some respects, a juster idea of human nature; though it must be confessed, that, in the sublime enquiry, their reason had been often guided by their imagination, and that their imagination had been prompted by their vanity. When they viewed with complacency the extent of their own mental powers, when they exercised the various faculties of memory, of fancy, and of judgment in the most profound speculations, or the most important labours; and when they reflected on the desire of fame, which transported them into future ages, far beyond the bounds of death and of the grave; they were unwilling to confound themselves with the beasts of the field, or to suppose that a being, for whose dignity they entertained the most sincere admiration, could be limited to a spot of earth, and to a few years of duration.

Decline and Fall, chap. xv.

THE DOOM OF ROME

A REGULAR series was prepared of all the moral and physical evils which can afflict a flourishing nation; intestine discord, and the invasion of the fiercest barbarians from the unknown regions of the North; pestilence and famine, comets and eclipses, earthquakes and inundations. All these were only so many

preparatory and alarming signs of the great catastrophe of Rome, when the country of the Scipios and the Cæsars should be consumed by a flame from Heaven, and the city of the seven hills, with her palaces, her temples, and her triumphal arches, should be buried in a vast lake of fire and brimstone.

Decline and Fall, chap. xv.

AN OPINION OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

THE chaste severity of the Fathers, in whatever related to the commerce of the two sexes, flowed from the same principle; their abhorrence of every enjoyment which might gratify the sensual, and degrade the spiritual, nature of man. It was their favourite opinion, that if Adam had preserved his obedience to the Creator, he would have lived for ever in a state of virgin purity, and that some harmless mode of vegetation might have peopled Paradise with a race of innocent and immortal beings.

Ibid.

THE SAGES OF GREECE AND ROME

DURING the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of Nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world.

Ibid.

THE DECLINE AND FALL

It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last line of the last page, in a summer house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake and mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and equable companion, and that, whatsoever might be the future fate of my *History*, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.

Autobiography.

THE LATER YEARS

The present is a fleeting moment, the past is no more; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may possibly be my last; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow me about fifteen years, and I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of Nature, who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, and our fame

and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation, that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.

Autobiography.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
1770-1850

POETRY

THE Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men and the objects which interest them.

Preface to 2d ed., Lyrical Ballads.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
1772–1834

THE STARS

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The Ancient Mariner, Prose Argument.

NATURE

The love of Nature is ever returned double to us, not only [as] the delighter in our delight, but by linking our sweetest, but of themselves perishable feelings to distinct and vivid images, which we ourselves, at times, and which a thousand casual recollections recall to our memory. She is the preserver, the treasurer, of our joys. Even in sickness and nervous diseases she has peopled our imagination with lovely forms, which have sometimes overpowered the inward pain and brought with them their old sensations. And even when all men have seemed to desert us, and the friend of our heart has passed on with one glance from his "cold disliking eye —" yet even then the blue heaven spreads itself out and bends over us, and the little tree still shelters us under its plumage as a second cope, a domestic firmament, and the low

creeping gale will sigh in the heath plant and soothe us by sound of sympathy, till the lulled grief lose itself in fixed gaze on the purple heath-blossom, till the present beauty becomes a vision of memory.

Anima Poetae, p. 246.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR
1775–1864

DEEP LOVE

THERE is a gloom in deep love, as in deep water: there is a silence in it which suspends the foot, and the folded arms and the dejected head are the images it reflects. No voice shakes its surface: the Muses themselves approach it with a tardy and a timid step, and with a low and tremulous and melancholy song.

Pericles and Aspasia.

MORTALITY

LAODAMEIA died; Helen died; Leda, the beloved of Jupiter, went before. It is better to repose in the earth betimes than to sit up late; better, than to cling pertinaciously to what we feel crumbling under us, and to protract an inevitable fall. We may enjoy the present while we are insensible of infirmity and decay: but the present, like a note in music, is nothing but as it appertains to what is past and what is to come. There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave: there are no voices, O Rhodopè, that are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last.

Æsop and Rhodopè.

THE SONG OF THE FATES

THE Fates also have sung, beyond thy hearing, of pleasanter scenes than snow-fed Hebrus; of more

than dim grottoes and sky-bright waters. Even now a low murmur swells upward to my ear: and not from the spindle comes the sound, but from those who sing slowly over it, bending all three their tremulous heads together. I wish thou couldst hear it; for seldom are their voices so sweet. Thy pillow intercepts the song, perhaps: lie down again, lie down, my Rhodopè! I will repeat what they are saying:

"Happier shalt thou be, nor less glorious, than even she, the truly beloved, for whose return to the distaff and the lyre the portals of Taenarus flew open. In the woody dells of Ismarus, and when she bathed among the swans of Strymon, the Nymphs called her Eurydice. Thou shalt behold that fairest and that fondest one hereafter. But first thou must go unto the land of the lotos, where famine never cometh, and where alone the works of man are immortal."

Æsop and Rhodopè.

LET men do these things if they will. Perhaps there is no harm in it; perhaps it makes them no crueller than they would be otherwise. But it is hard to take away what we cannot give, and life is a pleasant thing — at least to birds. No doubt the young ones say tender things to one another, and even the old ones do not dream of death.

Landor, English Men of Letters, p. 55.

IN the shades alone, but in the shades of Homer, does Ajax arise to his full loftiness; in the shades alone, but in the shades of Virgil, is Dido the arbitress of our tears.

Pentameron.

I SHALL dine late; but the dining-room will be well lighted, the guests few and select.

Archdeacon Hare and Landor.

HE who is within two paces of the ninetieth year may sit down and make no excuses; he must be unpopular, he never tried to be much otherwise; he never contended with a contemporary, but walked alone on the far eastern uplands, meditating and remembering.

Selections from Landor, Golden Treasury, p. 345.

CHARLES LAMB

1775–1834

TOWN AND COUNTRY

SEPARATE from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead Nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the very women of the Town; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old bookstalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes — London itself a pantomime and a masquerade — all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have

no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books) for groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about like a faithful dog (only exceeding him in knowledge) wherever I have moved, old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school, — these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of anything. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind: and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm, are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city.

Letter to Wordsworth, Jan. 30, 1801.

MY FIRST PLAY

THE orchestra lights at length arose, those "fair Auroras"! Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again — and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up — I was not past six years old and the play was "Artaxerxes"!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History, the ancient part of it, and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import, but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time, and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshipper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams. Harlequin's invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

Elia: My First Play.

THE GREAT HOUSE

I TOLD how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out; sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself,

unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me; and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy looking yew-trees or the firs, and picking up the red berries and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at, or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me, or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth, or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings. I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children.

Elia: Dream Children.

BLAKESMOOR

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that though there lay — I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion — half hid by trees what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonish-

ment, a pretty brawling brook had been the Lacus Incognitus of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects, and those at no great distance from the house — I was told of such — what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden? So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison, and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls.

Elia: Blakemoor in H—shire.

THOMAS COVENTRY

What insolent familiar durst have mated Thomas Coventry? — whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory and path-keeping, indivertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the brow-beater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear. His growl was as thunder in their ears, whether he spake to them in mirth or in rebuke, his invitatory notes being, indeed, of all, the most repulsive and horrid. Clouds of snuff, aggravating the natural terrors of his speech, broke from each majestic nostril, darkening the air. He took it, not by pinches, but a palmful at once, diving for it under the mighty flaps of his old-fashioned waistcoat pocket; his waistcoat red and angry, his coat dark rappee, tinctured by dye original, and by adjuncts, with buttons of obsolete gold. And so he paced the terrace.

Ibid., The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple.

THE OLD BENCHERS

FANTASTIC forms, whither are ye fled? Or, if the like of you exist, why exist they no more for me? ye inexplicable, half-understood appearances, why comes in reason to tear away the preternatural mist, bright or gloomy, that enshrouded you? Why make ye so sorry a figure in my relation, who made up to me — to my childish eyes — the mythology of the Temple? In those days I saw Gods, as "old men covered with a mantle," walking upon the earth. Let the dreams of classic idolatry perish — extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling — in the heart of childhood, there will, for ever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition — the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital — from everyday forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light, when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

Elia: The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple.

THE BOY ELIA

IF I know aught of myself, no one whose mind is introspective — and mine is painfully so — can have a less respect for his present identity than I have for the man Elia. I know him to be light, and vain, and humoursome; a notorious . . .; addicted to . . .; averse from counsel, neither taking it nor offering it; — . . . besides; a stammering buffoon; what you will; lay it on, and spare not: I subscribe to it all, and

much more than thou canst be willing to lay at his door; but for the child Elia, that "other me" there in the background, I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master — with as little reference, I protest, to this stupid changeling of five-and-forty, as if it had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient smallpox at five, and rougher medicaments. I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ's, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that unknown had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least colour of falsehood. God help thee, Elia, how art thou changed! Thou art sophisticated. I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was — how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful! From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself, and not some dissembling guardian, presenting a false identity, to give the rule to my unpractised steps and regulate the tone of my moral being!

Elia: New Year's Eve.

EATING

I AM no Quaker at my food. I confess I am not indifferent to the kinds of it. Those unctuous morsels of deer's flesh were not made to be received with dispassionate services. I hate a man who swallows it, affecting not to know what he is eating. I suspect his taste in higher matters. I shrink instinctively from one who professes to like minced veal. There is a physiognomical character in the tastes for food. C—— holds that a man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple-dumplings. I am not certain but

he is right. With the decay of my first innocence, I confess a less and less relish daily for those innocuous cates. The whole vegetable tribe have lost their gust with me. Only I stick to asparagus, which still seems to inspire gentle thoughts.

Elia: Grace before Meat.

ANTIPATHIES

THAT the author of the Religio Medici, mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences, in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual, should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself — earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities —

> Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky,

I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind, national or individual, to an unhealthy excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent, it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices — made up of likings and dislikings — the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel towards all equally. The more purely English word that expresses sympathy will better explain my meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy

man, who upon another account cannot be my mate or *fellow*. I cannot *like* all people alike.

Elia: Imperfect Sympathies.

THE JEWS

I HAVE, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids. But I should not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the one side, of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must and ought to affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and kindly yet, or that a few fine words, such as candour, liberality, the light of a nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion.

Ibid., Imperfect Sympathies.

FOOLS

IN sober verity I will confess a truth to thee, reader. I love a *Fool* — as naturally as if I were of kith and kin to him. When, a child, with child-like apprehensions, that dived not below the surface of the matter, I read those *Parables* — not guessing at the involved wisdom — I had more yearnings towards that simple architect, that built his house upon the sand, than I entertained for his more cautious neighbour; I grudged at the hard censure pronounced upon the quiet soul that kept his talent; and — prizing their

simplicity beyond the more provident, and, to my apprehension, somewhat *unfeminine* wariness of their competitors — I felt a kindness, that almost amounted to a *tendre*, for those five thoughtless virgins. I have never made an acquaintance since that lasted, or a friendship that answered, with any that had not some tincture of the absurd in their characters. I venerate an honest obliquity of understanding. The more laughable blunders a man shall commit in your company, the more tests he giveth you that he will not betray or overreach you. I love the safety which a palpable hallucination warrants, the security which a word out of season ratifies. And take my word for this, reader, and say a fool told it you, if you please, that he who hath not a dram of folly in his mixture hath points of much worse matter in his composition. It is observed that "the foolisher the fowl, or fish, woodcocks, dotterels, cods'-head, etc. — the finer the flesh thereof;" and what are commonly the world's received fools but such whereof the world is not worthy? and what have been some of the kindliest patterns of our species, but so many darlings of absurdity, minions of the goddess, and her white boys? Reader, if you wrest my words beyond their fair construction, it is you, and not I, that are the *April Fool.*

Elia: All Fools' Day.

MUSIC

When my friend commences upon one of those solemn anthems, which peradventure struck upon my heedless ear, rambling in the side aisles of the dim Abbey some five-and-thirty years since, waking a new sense, and putting a soul of old religion into my

young apprehension — (whether it be *that*, in which the Psalmist, weary of the persecutions of bad men, wisheth to himself dove's wings, or *that other*, which, with a like measure of sobriety and pathos, inquireth by what means the young man shall best cleanse his mind) — a holy calm pervadeth me. I am for the time

—— rapt above earth,
And possess joys not promised at my birth.

But when this master of the spell, not content to have laid his soul prostrate, goes on, in his power, to inflict more bliss than lies in her capacity to receive — impatient to overcome her "earthly" with his "heavenly," — still pouring in, for protracted hours, fresh waves and fresh from the sea of sound, or from that inexhausted *German* Ocean, above which, in triumphant progress, dolphin-seated, ride those Arions *Haydn* and *Mozart*, with their attendant Tritons, *Bach*, *Beethoven*, and a countless tribe, whom to attempt to reckon up would but plunge me again in the deeps, — I stagger under the weight of harmony, reeling to and fro at my wits' end; — clouds, as of frankincense, oppress me — priests, altars, censers, dazzle before me — the genius of *his* religion hath me in her toils — a shadowy triple tiara invests the brow of my friend, late so naked, so ingenuous — he is Pope, and by him sits, like as in the anomaly of dreams, a she-Pope too — tri-coroneted like himself! I am converted, and yet a Protestant; — at once *malleus hereticorum*, and myself grand heresiarch: or three heresies centre in my person: — I am Marcion, Ebion, and Cerinthus — Gog and Magog — what not? — till the coming in of the friendly supper-tray dissipates the figment, and a draught of true Lu-

theran beer (in which chiefly my friend shows himself no bigot) at once reconciles me to the rationalities of a purer faith; and restores to me the genuine unterrifying aspects of my pleasant-countenanced host and hostess.

Elia: A Chapter on Ears.

LORD C.

THEN as to sentiment. . . . This kind of dish, above all, requires to be served up hot; or sent off in water-plates, that your friend may have it almost as warm as yourself. If it have time to cool, it is the most tasteless of all cold meats. I have often smiled at a conceit of the late Lord C. It seems that travelling somewhere about Geneva, he came to some pretty green spot or nook where a willow, or something, hung so fantastically and invitingly over a stream — was it? — or a rock? — no matter — but the stillness and the repose, after a weary journey 't is likely, in a languid moment of his Lordship's hot restless life, so took his fancy that he could imagine no place so proper, in the event of his death, to lay his bones in. This was all very natural and excusable as a sentiment, and shows his character in a very pleasing light. But when from a passing sentiment it came to be an act; and when, by a positive testamentary disposal, his remains were actually carried all that way from England; who was there, some desperate sentimentalists excepted, that did not ask the question, Why could not his Lordship have found a spot as solitary, a nook as romantic, a tree as green and pendant, with a stream as emblematic to his purpose, in Surrey, in Dorset, or in Devon?

Ibid., Distant Correspondents.

TITIAN'S ARIADNE

PRECIPITOUS, with his reeling satyr rout about him, re-peopling and re-illuming suddenly the waste places, drunk with a new fury beyond the grape, Bacchus, born in fire, fire-like flings himself at the Cretan. . . . With the desert all ringing with the mad cymbals of his followers, made lucid with the presence and new offers of a god — as if unconscious of Bacchus, or but idly casting her eyes as upon some unconcerning pageant — her soul undistracted from Theseus — Ariadne is still pacing the solitary shore in as much heart-silence, and in almost the same local solitude, with which she awoke at daybreak to catch the forlorn last glances of the sail that bore away the Athenian.

Elia: On the Production of Modern Art.

THE BODLEIAN

ANTIQUITY! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that being nothing, art everything! When thou *wert*, thou wert not antiquity — then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter *antiquity*, as thou calledst it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, *modern!* What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we for ever revert! The mighty future is as nothing, being everything! the past is everything, being nothing!

What were thy *dark ages?* Surely the sun rose as brightly then as now, and man got him to his work in the morning. Why is it we can never hear mention of them without an accompanying feeling, as though a

palpable obscure had dimmed the face of things, and that our ancestors wandered to and fro groping?

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me are thy repositories of mouldering learning, thy shelves ——

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers that have bequeathed their labours to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some dormitory or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odour of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

Elia: Oxford in the Vacation.

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

And doubtless, there is some notice in that invisible world, when one of us approacheth (as my friend did so lately) to their inexorable precincts. When a soul knocks once, twice, at death's door, the sensation aroused within the palace must be considerable; and the grim Feature, by modern science so often dispossessed of his prey, must have learned by this time to pity Tantalus.

A pulse assuredly was felt along the line of the Elysian shades, when the near arrival of G. D. was announced by no equivocal indications. From their seats of Asphodel arose the gentler and the graver ghosts — poet or historian — of Grecian or of Roman lore — to crown with unfading chaplets the half-finished love-labours of their unwearied scholiast. Him Markland expected — him Tyrwhitt hoped to

encounter — him the sweet lyrist of Peter House, whom he had barely seen upon earth, with newest airs prepared to greet —; and patron of the gentle Christ's boy, — who should have been his patron through life — the mild Askew, with longing aspirations leaned foremost from his venerable Æsculapian chair, to welcome into that happy company the matured virtues of the man whose tender scions in the boy he himself upon earth had so prophetically fed and watered.

The Last Essays of Elia : Amicus Redivivus.

MUNDEN

Who like him can throw, or ever attempted to throw, a preternatural interest over the commonest daily-life objects? A table or a joint-stool, in his conception, rises into a dignity equivalent to Cassiopeia's chair. It is invested with constellatory importance. You could not speak of it with more deference if it were mounted into the firmament. A beggar in the hands of Michael Angelo, says Fuseli, rose the Patriarch of Poverty. So the gusto of Munden antiquates and ennobles what it touches. His pots and his ladles are as grand and primal as the seething-pots and hooks seen in old prophetic vision. A tub of butter, contemplated by him, amounts to a Platonic idea. He understands a leg of mutton in its quiddity. He stands wondering, amid the commonplace materials of life, like primeval man with the sun and stars about him. *Elia: On the Acting of Munden.*

MORTALITY

Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it

indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now, shall I confess a truth? — I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like misers' farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away "like a weaver's shuttle." Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country, the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets.

Elia: New Year's Eve.

THE THOUGHT OF DEATH

In winter this intolerable disinclination to dying — to give it its mildest name — does more especially haunt and beset me. In a genial August noon, beneath a sweltering sky, death is almost problematic. At those times do such poor snakes as myself enjoy an immortality. Then we expand and burgeon. Then we are as strong again, as valiant again, as wise again, and a great deal taller. The blast that nips and shrinks me, puts me in thoughts of death. All things allied to the insubstantial wait upon that master-feeling — cold, numbness, dreams, perplexity; moon-

light itself, with its shadowy and spectral appearances, — that cold ghost of the sun, or Phœbus' sickly sister, like that innutritious one denounced in the Canticles: — I am none of her minions — I hold with the Persian.

Whatsoever thwarts or puts me out of my way brings death into my mind. All partial evils, like humours, run into that capital plague-sore. — I have heard some profess an indifference to life. Such hail the end of their existence as a port of refuge; and speak of the grave as of some soft arms, in which they may slumber as on a pillow. Some have wooed death — but out upon thee, I say, thou foul, ugly phantom! I detest, abhor, execrate, and (with Friar John) give thee to six-score thousand devils, as in no instance to be excused or tolerated, but shunned as an universal viper; to be branded, proscribed, and spoken evil of! In no way can I be brought to digest thee, thou thin, melancholy *Privation*, or more frightful and confounding *Positive!*

Those antidotes prescribed against the fear of thee are altogether frigid and insulting, like thyself. For what satisfaction hath a man that he shall "lie down with kings and emperors in death," who in his lifetime never greatly coveted the society of such bedfellows? — or, forsooth, that "so shall the fairest face appear?" — why, to comfort me, must Alice W—n be a goblin? More than all, I conceive disgust at those impertinent and misbecoming familiarities inscribed upon your ordinary tombstones. Every dead man must take upon himself to be lecturing me with his odious truism, that "Such as he now is I must shortly be." Not so shortly, friend, perhaps as thou imaginest. In the meantime I am alive. I move about.

I am worth twenty of thee. Know thy betters! Thy New Years' days are past. I survive, a jolly candidate for 1821. Another cup of wine!

Elia: New Year's Eve.

RISING WITH THE LARK

Popular Fallacies, XIV. — That we should rise with the lark.

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalists enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman, that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises, we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half-hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sunrisings, as we are told, and such like gawds, abroad in the world, in summer-time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But having been tempted once or twice in earlier life to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances; which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic. . . . Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, or are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by whole-

sale, we choose to linger abed, and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images which night in a confused mass presented; to snatch them from forgetfulness, to shape and mould them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision: to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies; to drag into daylight a struggling and half-vanishing nightmare; to handle and examine the terrors or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid or so careless as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns; or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business; we have done with it; we have discharged ourselves of it. Why should we get up? We have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick-bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half-acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed grey before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear but as the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic

images in play-houses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore, we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something, but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore, we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

Elia: Popular Fallacies.

DEATH OF ELIA

I DO not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on

this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his surburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtseyed, as he thought, in an especial manner to *him*. "They take me for a visiting governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sat gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but, such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

Last Essays of Elia: Preface.

SENTENCES

THE noises of children, playing their own fancies — as I now hearken to them by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell — by distance made more sweet — inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so — for in the voice of

that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accents of man's conversation.

The Old and the New Schoolmaster.

I HATE people who meet Time half-way. I am for no compromise with that inevitable spoiler.

My Relations.

O! SHAKE not the castles of his pride — endure yet for a season, bright moments of confidence — "stand still, ye watches of the element," that Malvolio may be still in fancy fair Olivia's lord!

On Some of the Old Actors.

WHERE is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal?

The Superannuated Man.

AND it could not taste of death, by reason of its adoption into immortal palaces; but it was to know weakness, and reliance, and the shadow of human imbecility; and it went with a lame gait; but in its goings it exceeded all mortal children in grace and swiftness.

The Child Angel.

HAIL, candle-light! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindliest luminary of the three — if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon! — We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep by candle-light. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial

nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unillumined fastnesses!

Popular Fallacies, xv.

I HAVE killed an hour or two in this poor scrawl. I am a sanguinary murderer of time, and would kill him inch-meal just now. But the snake is vital.

Letter, 25 *July*, 1829.

A GARDEN was the primitive prison, till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns, — these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence.

22 *January*, 1830.

ALAS! can we ring the bells backward? Can we unlearn the arts that pretend to civilize, and then burn the world? There is a march of science; but who shall beat the drums for its retreat?

20 *December*, 1830.

WILLIAM HAZLITT
1778–1830

HAZLITT'S FATHER

After being tossed about from congregation to congregation in the heats of the Unitarian controversy, and squabbles about the American war, he had been relegated to an obscure village, where he was to spend the last thirty years of his life, far from the only converse that he loved, the talk about disputed texts of Scripture, and the cause of civil and religious liberty. Here he passed his days, repining but resigned, in the study of the Bible, and the perusal of the Commentators — huge folios, not easily got through, one of which would outlast a winter! Why did he pore on these from morn to night (with the exception of a walk in the fields or a turn in the garden to gather broccoli-plants or kidney beans of his own rearing, with no small degree of pride and pleasure)? Here were "no figures nor no fantasies" — neither poetry nor philosophy — nothing to dazzle, nothing to excite modern curiosity; but to his lack-lustre eyes there appeared, within the pages of the ponderous, unwieldy, neglected tomes, the sacred name of JEHOVAH in Hebrew capitals: pressed down by the weight of the style, worn to the last fading thinness of the understanding, there were glimpses, glimmering notions of the patriarchal wanderings, with palm-trees hovering in the horizon, and processions of camels at the distance of three thousand years; there was Moses with the Burning Bush, the number of

the Twelve Tribes, types, shadows, glosses on the law and the prophets; there were discussions (dull enough) on the age of Methuselah, a mighty speculation! there were outlines, rude guesses at the shape of Noah's Ark and of the riches of Solomon's Temple; questions as to the date of the Creation, predictions of the end of all things; the great lapses of time, the strange mutations of the globe were unfolded with the voluminous leaf, as it turned over; and though the soul might slumber with an hieroglyphic veil of inscrutable mysteries drawn over it, yet it was in a slumber ill-exchanged for all the sharpened realities of sense, wit, fancy, or reason. My father's life was comparatively a dream; but it was a dream of infinity and eternity, of death, the resurrection, and a judgment to come!

Winterslow: My First Acquaintance with Poets.

THE SNOB

Could I have had my will, I should have been born a lord: but one would not be a booby lord neither. I am haunted by an odd fancy of driving down the Great North Road in a chaise and four, about fifty years ago, and coming to the inn at Ferry-bridge, with outriders, white favours, and a coronet on the panels; and then, too, I choose my companion in the coach. Really there is a witchcraft in all this that makes it necessary to turn away from it, lest, in the conflict between imagination and impossibility, I should grow feverish and light-headed! But, on the other hand, if one was a born lord, should one have the same idea (that every one else has) of *a peeress in her own right?* Is not distance, giddy elevation, mysterious awe, an impassable gulf, necessary to form

this idea in the mind, that fine ligament of "ethereal braid, sky-woven," that lets down heaven upon earth, fair as enchantment, soft as Berenice's hair, bright and garlanded like Ariadne's crown; and is it not better to have had this idea all through life — to have caught but glimpses of it, to have known it but in a dream — than to have been born a lord ten times over, with twenty pampered menials at one's beck, and twenty descents to boast of?

Ibid., On Personal Identity.

THE STAGE

Oh, many-coloured scenes of human life: where are ye more truly represented than in the mirror of the stage? or where is that eternal principle of vicissitude which rules over ye, the painted pageant and the sudden gloom, more strikingly exemplified than here? At the entrance to our great theatres, in large capitals over the front of the stage, might be written MUTABILITY! Does not the curtain that falls each night on the pomps and vanities it was withdrawn awhile to reveal (and the next moment all is dark) afford a fine moral lesson? Here, in small room, is crowded the map of human life; the lengthened, varied scroll is unfolded like rich tapestry with its quaint and flaunting devices spread out; whatever can be saved from the giddy whirl of ever-rolling time and of this round orb, which moves on and never stops, all that can strike the sense, can touch the heart, can stir up laughter or call tears from their secret source, is here treasured up and displayed ostentatiously — here is Fancy's motley wardrobe, the masks of all the characters that were ever played — here is a glass set up clear and large enough to show us our own features

and those of all mankind — here, in this enchanted mirror, are represented, not darkly, but in vivid hues and in bold relief, the struggle of Life and Death, the momentary pause between the cradle and the grave, with charming hopes and fears, terror and pity in a thousand modes, strange and ghastly apparitions, the events of history, the fictions of poetry (warm from the heart); all these, and more than can be numbered in my feeble page, fill that airy space where the green curtain rises, and haunt it with evanescent shapes and indescribable yearnings.

The Free Admission.

COLERIDGE

I MAY say of him here, that he is the only person I ever knew who answered to the idea of a man of genius. He is the only person from whom I ever learnt anything. There is only one thing he could learn from me in return, but *that* he has not. He was the first poet I ever knew. His genius at that time had angelic wings, and fed on manna. He talked on for ever; and you wished him to talk on for ever. His thoughts did not seem to come with labour and effort; but as if borne on the gusts of genius, and as if the wings of his imagination lifted him from off his feet. His voice rolled on the ear like the pealing organ, and its sound alone was the music of thought. His mind was clothed with wings; and raised on them, he lifted philosophy to heaven. In his descriptions, you then saw the progress of human happiness and liberty in bright and never-ending succession, like the steps of Jacob's ladder, with airy shapes ascending and descending, and with the voice of God at the top of the ladder. And shall I, who heard him then, listen to him

now? — Not I! That spell is broke; that time is gone for ever; that voice is heard no more: but still the recollection comes rushing by with thoughts of long-past years, and rings in my ears with never-dying sound.

Lectures on the English Poets. viii.

FROM THE LIBER AMORIS

PERFECT love has this advantage in it, that it leaves the possessor of it nothing farther to desire. There is one object (at least) in which the soul finds absolute content, for which it seeks to live, or dares to die. The heart has, as it were, filled up the moulds of the imagination. The truth of passion keeps pace with and outvies the extravagance of mere language. There are no words so fine, no flattery so soft, that there is not a sentiment beyond them, that it is impossible to express, at the bottom of the heart where true love is. What idle sounds the common phrases, *adorable creature*, *angel*, *divinity*, are! What a proud reflection it is to have a feeling answering to all these, rooted in the breast, unalterable, unutterable, to which all other feelings are light and vain! Perfect love reposes on the object of its choice, like the halcyon on the wave; and the air of heaven is around it.

YOU once made me believe I was not hated by her I loved; and for that sensation, so delicious was it, though but a mockery and a dream, I owe you more than I can ever pay. I thought to have dried up my tears for ever, the day I left you; but as I write this, they stream again. If they did not, I think my heart would burst. I walk out here of an afternoon, and hear the notes of the thrush, that come up from a

sheltered valley below, welcome in the spring; but they do not melt my heart as they used: it is grown cold and dead. As you say, it will one day be colder.

In her sight there was Elysium; her smile was heaven; her voice was enchantment; the air of love waved round her, breathing balm into my heart: for a little while I had sat with the gods at their golden tables, I had tasted of all earth's bliss.

I am not mad, but my heart is so; and raves within me, fierce and untameable, like a panther in its den, and tries to get loose to its lost mate, and fawn on her hand and bend lowly at her feet.

Within my heart is lurking suspicion, and base fear, and shame and hate; but above all, tyrannous love sits throned, crowned with her graces, silent and in tears.

I had hopes, I had prospects to come, the flattery of something like fame, a pleasure in writing, health even would have come back with her smile — she has blighted all, turned all to poison and childish tears. Yet the barbed arrow is in my heart — I can neither endure it, nor draw it out; for with it flows my life's blood. I had conversed too long with abstracted truth to trust myself with the immortal thoughts of love. *That S. L. might have been mine, and now never can* — these are the two sole propositions that for ever stare me in the face, and look ghastly in at my poor brain. I am in some sense proud that I can feel this dreadful passion — it gives me a kind of rank in the kingdom of love — but I could have wished it

had been for an object that at least could have understood its value and pitied its excess. . . . The gates of Paradise were at once open to me too, and I blushed to enter but with the golden keys of love!

I AM afraid she will soon grow common to my imagination, as well as worthless in herself. Her image seems fast "going into the wastes of time," like a weed that the wave bears farther and farther from me. Alas! thou poor hapless weed, when I entirely lose sight of thee, and for ever, no flower will ever bloom on earth to glad my heart again!

THOMAS DE QUINCEY
1785–1859

FUNERAL BELLS

SWEET funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. . . .

I sat, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery, advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. "Hush!" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen —"hush! — this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else" — and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head — "or else, oh heavens! it is *victory* that is final, victory that swallows up all strife."

The English Mail Coach.

THE CHEMIST

I FEEL a mystic importance attached to the minutest circumstances connected with the place, and the time, and the man (if man he was), that first laid open to me the paradise of opium-eaters. It was a Sunday afternoon, wet and cheerless; and a duller spectacle this earth of ours has not to show than a rainy Sunday in London. My road homewards lay

through Oxford Street; and near the "*stately* Pantheon" (as Mr. Wordsworth has obligingly called it) I saw a druggist's shop. The druggist (unconscious minister of celestial pleasures!) as if in sympathy with the rainy Sunday, looked dull and stupid, just as any mortal druggist might be expected to look on a rainy London Sunday; and when I asked for the tincture of opium, he gave it to me as any other man might do; and furthermore, out of my shilling returned to me what seemed to be a real copper halfpence, taken out of a real wooden drawer. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all such indications of humanity, he has ever since figured in my mind as a beatific vision of an immortal druggist, sent down to earth on a special mission to myself. And it confirms me in this way of considering him, that, when I next came up to London, I sought him near the stately Pantheon, and found him not; and thus to me, who knew not his name (if, indeed, he had one) he seemed rather to have vanished from Oxford Street than to have flitted into any other locality, or (which some abominable man suggested) to have absconded from the rent. The reader may choose to think of him as, possibly, no more than a sublunary druggist; it may be so, but my faith is better. I believe him to have evanesced. So unwillingly would I connect any mortal remembrances with that hour, and place, and creature that first brought me acquainted with the celestial drug.

The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.

THE CRISIS

THEN suddenly would come a dream of far different character — a tumultuous dream — commencing

with a music such as now I often heard in sleep — music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like *that*, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day — a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where — somehow, but I knew not how — by some beings, but I knew not by whom — a battle, a strife, an agony, was travelling through all its stages — was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable, from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its nature, its cause, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded," I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurryings to and fro, trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempests and human faces; and, at last, with a sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me; and but

a moment allowed — and clasped hands, with heart-breaking partings, and then — everlasting farewells! and with a sigh, such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated — everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated — everlasting farewells!

The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.

SENTENCES

So then, Oxford Street, stony-hearted stepmother, thou that listenest to the sighs of orphans, and drinkest the tears of children, at length I was dismissed from thee! The time was come that I no more should pace in anguish thy never-ending terraces; no more should wake and dream in captivity to the pangs of hunger. *Ibid.*

I FLED from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. *Ibid.*

LIKE God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain.

Suspiria de Profundis.

THE eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves

and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation, — Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted.

Suspiria de Profundis.

THE second Sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*, Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. . . . Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest.

Ibid.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
1792–1822

POETRY

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. . . . It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secret of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship; what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side of the grave, and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar? Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. . . .

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest mo-

ments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression: so that even in the desire and regret they leave, there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only, as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship, is essentially linked with such emotions; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted cord, and re-animate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried images of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide — abide,

because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man. *A Defence of Poetry.*

POETS AS LEGISLATORS

THE most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry. At such periods there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve the power which is seated on the throne of their own soul. It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations; for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age. Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

THE RUINS OF ROME

TIME has thrown its purple shadow athwart this scene, and no more is visible than the broad and everlasting character of human strength and genius, that pledge of all that is to be admirable and lovely in ages yet to come. Solemn Temples, where the senate of the world assembled, palaces, triumphal arches, and cloud-surrounded columns, loaded with the sculptured annals of conquest and domination — what actions and deliberations have they been destined to enclose and commemorate? Superstitious rites, which in their mildest form, outrage reason, and obscure the moral sense of mankind; schemes for wide-extended murder, and devastation, and misrule, and servitude; and lastly, these schemes brought to their tremendous consummations, and a human being returning in the midst of festival and solemn joy, with thousands and thousands of his enslaved and desolated species chained behind his chariot, exhibiting, as titles to renown, the labour of ages, and the admired creations of genius, overthrown by the brutal force which was placed as a sword within his hand, and — contemplation fearful and abhorred! — he himself, a being capable of the best and gentlest emotions, inspired with the persuasion that he has done a virtuous deed!

Essays, Letters from Abroad, The Coliseum.

LOVE

WHAT is love? Ask him who lives, what is life? ask him who adores, what is God?

I know not the internal constitution of other men, nor even thine, whom I now address. I see that in

some external attributes they resemble me; but when, misled by that appearance, I have thought to appeal to something in common, and unburthen my inmost soul to them, I have found my language misunderstood, like one in a distant and savage land. The more opportunities they have afforded me for experience, the wider has appeared the interval between us, and to a greater distance have the points of sympathy been withdrawn. With a spirit ill-fitted to sustain such proof, trembling and feeble through its tenderness, I have everywhere sought sympathy, and have found only repulse and disappointment.

Essays, Letter from Abroad, On Love.

THE RELIGION OF LOVE

THE freedom of women produced the poetry of sexual love. Love became a religion, the idols of whose worship were ever present. It was as if the statues of Apollo and the Muses had been endowed with life and motion, and had walked forth among their worshippers; so that earth became peopled by the inhabitants of a diviner world. The familiar appearance and proceedings of life became wonderful and heavenly, and a paradise was created as out of the wrecks of Eden.

A Defence of Poetry.

THE PENATES

YOU must shelter my roofless Penates, dedicate some new temple to them, and perform the functions of a priest in my absence. They are innocent deities, and their worship neither sanguinary nor absurd.

Leave Mammon and Jehovah to those who delight in wickedness and slavery — their altars are stained

with blood or polluted with gold, the price of blood. But the shrines of the Penates are good warm fires, or window-frames intertwined with creeping plants; their hymns are the purring of kittens, the hissing of kettles, the long talks over the past and dead, the laugh of children, the warm wind of summer filling the quiet house, and the pelting storm of winter struggling in vain for entrance.

Letters, To Peacock, 17 *July* 1816.

SENTENCES

As to us — we are uncertain people, who are chased by the spirits of our destiny from purpose to purpose, like clouds by the wind.

Ibid., Summer 1820.

POETS — the best of them, are a very chameleonic race; they take the colour not only of what they feed on, but of the very leaves under which they pass.

13 *July* 1821.

A POET is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds.

A Defence of Poetry.

PETRARCH, whose verses are as spells, which unseal the inmost enchanted fountains of the delight which is in the grief of love.

Ibid.

JOHN KEATS
1795–1821

FROM HIS LETTERS

Now it appears to me that almost any Man may like the spider spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel — the points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean — full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury. . . . I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness. I have not read any Books — the Morning said I was right — I had no idea but of the Morning, and the Thrush said I was right.

19 *February* 1818.

In poetry I have a few axioms, and you will see how far I am from their centre.

1st. I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity. It should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

2nd. Its touches of beauty should never be halfway, thereby making the reader breathless, instead of content. The rise, the progress, the setting of Imagery should, like the sun, come natural to him, shine

over him, and set soberly, although in magnificence, leaving him in the luxury of twilight.

27 *February* 1818.

THE Banks of the Clyde are extremely beautiful — the north end of Loch Lomond grand in excess — the entrance at the lower end to the narrow part from a little distance is precious good — the Evening was beautiful, nothing could surpass our fortune in the weather — yet was I worldly enough to wish for a fleet of chivalry Barges with Trumpets and Banners just to die away before me into that blue place among the mountains.

17 *July* 1818.

WHEN I was a schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure Goddess; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not.

18 *July* 1818.

THE Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself — That which is creative must create itself— In Endymion, I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the Soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortabie advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest.

9 *October* 1818.

THERE is a sublimity to welcome me home — the roaring of the wind is my wife, and the Stars through the window pane are my Children.

25 *October* 1818.

I VALUE more the privilege of seeing great things in loneliness than the fame of a Prophet.

22 *December* 1818.

THE greater part of Men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk. . . . I go among the Fields and catch a glimpse of a Stoat or a fieldmouse peeping out of the withered grass — the creature hath a purpose, and its eyes are bright with it. I go amongst the buildings of a city and I see a Man hurrying along — to what? the Creature has a purpose, and his eyes are bright with it. . . . Even here, though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of, I am, however young, writing at random, straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion.

19 *March* 1819.

I AM convinced more and more, every day, that fine writing is, next to fine doing, the top thing of the world; the Paradise Lost becomes a greater wonder. The more I know what my diligence may in time probably effect, the more does my heart distend with Pride and Obstinacy. . . . My own being which I know to be becomes of more consequence to me than the crowds of Shadows in the shape of men and

women that inhabit a kingdom. The soul is a world of itself, and has enough to do in its own home.

25 *August* 1819.

How astonishingly does the chance of leaving the world impress a sense of its natural beauties upon us! Like poor Falstaff, though I do not "babble," I think of green fields; I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from my infancy — their shapes and colours are as new to me as if I had just created them with a superhuman fancy. It is because they are connected with the most thoughtless and the happiest moments of our lives.

16 *February* 1820.

THOMAS CARLYLE
1795–1881

FRANCE AROUSED

Ye have roused her, then, ye Emigrants and Despots of the world; France is roused! Long have ye been lecturing and tutoring this poor Nation, like cruel uncalled-for pedagogues, shaking over her your ferules of fire and steel; it is long that ye have pricked and filliped and affrighted her, there as she sat helpless in the dead cerements of a Constitution, you gathering in on her from all lands, with your armaments and plots, your invadings and truculent bullyings; — and lo now, ye have pricked her to the quick, and she is up, and her blood is up. The dead cerements are rent into cobwebs, and she fronts you in that terrible strength of Nature, which no man has measured, which goes down to Madness and Tophet: see now how ye will deal with her.

This month of September 1792, which has become one of the memorable months of History, presents itself under two most diverse aspects; all of black on the one side, all of bright on the other. Whatsoever is cruel in the panic frenzy of Twenty-five million men, whatsoever is great in the simultaneous death-defiance of Twenty-five million men, stand here in abrupt contrast, near by one another. As indeed is usual when a man, how much more when a Nation of men, is hurled suddenly beyond the limits. For Nature, as green as she looks, rests everywhere on dread foundations, were we farther down; and Pan, to

whose music the Nymphs dance, has a cry in him that can drive all men distracted.

French Revolution, vol. III. 1, i.

DEATH OF PRINCE HENRY, SON OF JAMES I

He lies there, a beautiful ideal youth, consecrated by the tears and sorrowful heart worship of all the world. The Lord Mayor's feast is sorrowfully clouded; — all feasts are sorrowfully clouded: broad Anne of Denmark weeps once more from the bottom of her Mother's heart as she hoped never to have done; paternal Majesty does not weep, but his thoughts, I believe, go wandering over Time and over Eternity, over Past and Present, in a restless, arid, vague, still more tragic manner, and discern at glimpses what a sorry Rag-fair of a business this of Life and its Eloquences is: — what a frivolous play-actor existence we have at Whitehall here, with the Furies looking through the arras on us.

Historical Sketches, pp. 95–96.

COLERIDGE

The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength.

He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking, he rather shuffled than decisively stept; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, in corkscrew fashion, and kept trying both. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring, and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and singsong; he spoke as if preaching, — you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly and weightiest things. I still recollect his "object" and "subject," terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province; and how he sang and snuffled them into "om-m-mject" and "sum-m-mject," with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along. No talk, in his century or in any other, could be more surprising.

Life of Stirling, I, viii.

CARLYLE IN SCOTLAND

My days pass along here, where a multiplicity of small things still detains but does not occupy me, in a most silent, almost sabbath-like manner. . . . I see nobody; I do not even read much. The old hills and rivers, the old earth with her star firmaments and burial-vaults, carry on a mysterious, unfathomable dialogue with me. It is eight years since I have seen a spring, and in such a mood I never saw one. It seems all new and original to me — beautiful, almost solemn. Whose great laboratory is that? The hills stand snow-powdered, pale, bright. The black hail-storm awakens in them, rushes down like a black swift ocean tide, valley answering valley; and again the sun blinks out, and the poor sower is casting his

grain into the furrow, hopeful he that the Zodiacs and far Heavenly Horologes have not faltered; that there will be yet another summer added for us and another harvest.

Life in London, chap. ix.

THE PIANO

How the ear of man is tortured in this terrestrial planet! Go where you will, the cock's shrill clarion, the dog's harsh watch note, not to speak of the melody of jackasses, and on streets, of wheel-barrows, wooden clogs, loud-voiced men, perhaps watchmen, break upon the hapless brain; and, if all was not enough, the "Piety of the Middle Ages" has founded tremendous bells; and the hollow triviality of the present age — far worse — has everywhere instituted the piano! Why are not at least all those cocks and cockerels boiled into soup, into everlasting silence? Or, if the Devil, some good night, should take his hammer and smite in shivers all and every piano of our European world, so that in broad Europe there were not one piano left soundable, would the harm be great? Would not, on the contrary, the relief be considerable? . . .

This miserable young woman that now in the next house to me spends all her young, bright days, not in learning to darn stockings, sew shirts, bake pastry, or any art, mystery, or business that will profit herself or others; not even in amusing herself or skipping on the grassplots with laughter of her mates; but simply and solely in raging from dawn to dusk, to night and midnight, on a hapless piano, which it is evident she will never in this world learn to render more musical than a pair of barn-fanners! The miserable young

female! The sound of her through the wall is to me an emblem of the whole distracted misery of this age; and her barn-fanners' rhythm becomes all too significant. *Life in London*, chap. x.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN IRELAND

I FELT how English Protestants, or the sons of such, might with zealous affection like to assemble here once a week and remind themselves of English purities and decencies and Gospel ordinances, in the midst of a black, howling Babel of superstitious savagery, like Hebrews sitting by the streams of Babylon. But I felt more clearly than ever how impossible it was that an extraneous son of Adam, first seized by the terrible conviction that he had a soul to be saved or damned, that he must read the riddle of this universe or go to perdition everlasting, could for a moment think of taking this respectable "performance" as the solution of the mystery for him. Oh heavens! never in this world! Weep by the streams of Babel, decent, clean English Irish; weep, for there is cause, till you can do something better than weep; but expect no Babylonian or any other mortal to concern himself with that affair of yours.

Ibid., chap. xvii.

SENTENCES

VERILY, this whole world grows magical and hypermagical to me: death written on all, yet everlasting life also written on all. How Homers, and Mahomets, and Bulwers, and snuffy Socinian preachers, and all people and things that sojourned on earth, go marching, marching, towards the Inane, till, as your boys say, Flop! they are not. *Ibid.*, chap. iv.

IT is astonishing what real pity I do feel for these poor squires and squires' daughters, all parading about in such places. Good heavens! And this is what you call the flower of life: and age, and darkness, and the grand Perhaps lying close in the rear of it.

Life in London, chap. xiii.

THESE fringes of lamplight, struggling up through smoke and thousandfold exhalation, some fathoms into the ancient reign of Night, what thinks Boötes of them, as he leads his Hunting-Dogs over the Zenith in their leash of sidereal fire?

Sartor Resartus, I, iii.

THE Merovingian Kings, slowly wending on their bullock-carts through the streets of Paris, with their long hair flowing, have all wended slowly on, — into Eternity.

French Revolution, I, ii.

FRIGHTFUL to all men is Death; from of old named King of Terrors. Our little compact home of an Existence, where we dwelt complaining, yet as in a home, is passing, in dark agonies, into an Unknown of Separation, Foreignness, unconditioned Possibility.

Ibid., I, iv.

HERALD shadows flit pale across the fire-brain of Mirabeau; heralds of the pale repose. While he tosses and storms, straining every nerve, in that sea of ambition and confusion, there comes, sombre and still, a monition that for him the issue of it will be swift death.

Ibid., X, vii.

SUCH issue came of Lambesc's charge on the Tuileries Garden: no striking of salutary terror into Chaillot promenaders; a striking into broad wakefulness of Frenzy and the three Furies — which otherwise were not asleep! For they lie always, those subterranean Eumenides (fabulous and yet so true), in the dullest existence of man; — and can dance, brandishing their dusky torches, shaking their serpent-hair.

French Revolution, IV, iv.

O POOR mortals, how ye make this Earth bitter for each other; this fearful and wonderful Life fearful and horrible; and Satan has his place in all hearts! Such agonies and ragings and wailings ye have, and have had, in all times: to be buried all, in so deep silence; and the salt sea is not swoln with your tears.

Ibid., IV, v.

"NATURE in late centuries," says Sauerteig, "was universally supposed to be dead; an old eight-day clock, made many thousand years ago, and still ticking, but dead as brass — which the Maker, at most, sat looking at, in a distant, singular, and indeed incredible manner."

Past and Present, I, v.

BRAVE Sea-captain, Norse Sea-king — Columbus, my hero, royalest Sea-king of all! it is no friendly environment this of thine, in the waste deep waters; around thee mutinous discouraged souls, behind thee disgrace and ruin, before thee the unpenetrated veil of Night.

Ibid., III, xi.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN
1801–1890

THE CLASSICS

Let us consider, too, how differently young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages which to a boy are but rhetorical commonplaces, neither better nor worse than a hundred others which any clever writer might supply, which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him, when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him, as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness. Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years, with a power over the mind, and a charm, which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival. Perhaps this is the reason of the mediæval opinion about Virgil, as if a prophet or magician; his single words and phrases, his pathetic half lines, giving utterance, as the voice of Nature herself, to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things, which is the experience of her children in every time.

Grammar of Assent.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON
1803–1882

THOUGHT AND REALITY

Each man sees his own life defaced and disfigured, as the life of man is not to his imagination. Each man sees over his own experience a certain stain of error, whilst that of other men looks fair and ideal. Let any man go back to those delicious relations which make the beauty of his life, which have given him sincerest instruction and nourishment, he will shrink and moan. Alas! I know not why, but infinite compunctions embitter in mature life the remembrances of budding joy, and cover every beloved name. Every thing is beautiful seen from the point of the intellect, or as truth. But all is sour if seen as experience. Details are melancholy; the plan is seemly and noble. In the actual world — the painful kingdom of time and place — dwell care and canker and fear. With thought, with the ideal, is immortal hilarity, the rose of joy. Round it all the Muses sing. But grief cleaves to names and persons and the partial interests of to-day and yesterday.

Essays: Love.

BEAUTY

The ancients called beauty the flowering of virtue. Who can analyse the nameless charm which glances from one and another face and form? We are touched with emotions of tenderness and complacency, but we cannot find whereat this dainty emotion, this

wandering gleam, points. It is destroyed for the imagination by any attempt to refer it to organization. Nor does it point to any relations of friendship or love known and described in society, but, as it seems to me, to a quite other and unattainable sphere, to relations of transcendent delicacy and sweetness, to what roses and violets hint and foreshow. We cannot approach beauty. Its nature is like opaline doves'-neck lustres, hovering and evanescent. . . . Personal beauty is then first charming and itself when it dissatisfies us with any end; when it becomes a story without an end; when it suggests gleams and visions and not earthly satisfactions; when it makes the beholder feel his unworthiness; when he cannot feel his right to it, though he were Cæsar; he cannot feel more right to it than to the firmament and the splendours of a sunset.

Essays: Love.

THE STRANGER

See, in any house where virtue and self-respect abide, the palpitation which the approach of a stranger causes. A commended stranger is expected and announced, and an uneasiness betwixt pleasure and pain invades all the hearts of a household. His arrival almost brings fear to the good hearts that would welcome him. The house is dusted, all things fly into their places, the old coat is exchanged for the new, and they must get up a dinner if they can. Of a commended stranger, only the good report is told by others, only the good and new is heard by us. He stands to us for humanity. He is what we wish. Having imagined and invested him, we ask how we should stand related in conversation and action with such a

man, and are uneasy with fear. The same idea exalts conversation with him. We talk better than we are wont. We have the nimblest fancy, a richer memory, and our dumb devil has taken leave for the time. For long hours we can continue a series of sincere, graceful, rich communications, drawn from the oldest, secretest experience, so that they who sit by, of our own kinsfolk and acquaintance, shall feel a lively surprise at our unusual powers. But as soon as the stranger begins to intrude his partialities, his definitions, his defects into the conversation, it is all over. He has heard the first, the last and best he will ever hear from us. He is no stranger now. Vulgarity, ignorance, misapprehension are old acquaintances. Now, when he comes, he may get the order, the dress, and the dinner, — but the throbbing of the heart and the communications of the soul, no more.

Essays: Friendship.

FRIENDSHIP

Our friendships hurry to short and poor conclusions, because we have made them a texture of wine and dreams, instead of the tough fibre of the human heart. The laws of friendship are austere and eternal, of one web with the laws of nature and of morals. But we have aimed at a swift and petty benefit, to suck a sudden sweetness. We snatch at the slowest fruit in the whole garden of God, which many summers and many winters must ripen. We seek our friend not sacredly, but with an adulterate passion which would appropriate him to ourselves. In vain. We are armed all over with subtle antagonisms, which, as soon as we meet, begin to play, and translate all poetry into stale prose. Almost all people de-

scend to meet. All association must be a compromise, and, what is worst, the very flower and aroma of the flower of each of the beautiful natures disappears as they approach each other. What a perpetual disappointment is actual society, even of the virtuous and gifted! After interviews have been compassed with long foresight, we must be tormented presently by baffled blows, by sudden, unseasonable apathies, by epilepsies of wit and of animal spirits, in the heyday of friendship and thought. Our faculties do not play us true, and both parties are relieved by solitude.

Essays: Friendship.

DISASTER

WHAT opium is instilled into all disaster! It shows formidable as we approach it, but there is at last no rough rasping friction, but the most slippery sliding surfaces; we fall soft on a thought; *Ate Dea* is gentle,

> "Over men's heads walking aloft,
> With tender feet treading so soft."

People grieve and bemoan themselves, but it is not half so bad with them as they say. There are moods in which we court suffering, in the hope that here at least we shall find reality, sharp peaks and edges of truth. But it turns out to be scene-painting and counterfeit. The only thing grief has taught me is to know how shallow it is. That, like all the rest, plays about the surface, and never introduces me into the reality, for contact with which we would even pay the costly price of sons and lovers. Was it Boscovich who found that bodies never come in contact? Well, souls never touch their objects. An innavigable sea washes with silent waves between us and the things

we aim at and converse with. Grief too will make us idealists. In the death of my son, now more than two years ago, I seem to have lost a beautiful estate,— no more. I cannot get it nearer to me. If to-morrow I should be informed of the bankruptcy of my principal debtors, the loss of my property would be a great inconvenience to me, perhaps, for many years; but it would leave me as it found me, — neither better nor worse. So is it with this calamity; it does not touch me; something which I fancied was a part of me, which could not be torn away without tearing me, nor enlarged without enriching me, falls off from me and leaves no scar. It was caducous. I grieve that grief can teach me nothing, nor carry me one step into real nature. The Indian who was laid under a curse that the wind should not blow on him, nor water flow to him, nor fire burn him, is a type of us all. The dearest events are summer-rain, and we the Para coats that shed every drop. Nothing is left us now but death. We look to that with a grim satisfaction, saying, There at least is reality that will not dodge us.

Essays: Experience.

SURFACE

THE fine young people despise life, but in me, and in such as with me are free from dyspepsia, and to whom a day is a sound and solid good, it is a great excess of politeness to look scornful and to cry for company. I am grown by sympathy a little eager and sentimental, but leave me alone and I should relish every hour and what it brought me, the potluck of the day, as heartily as the oldest gossip in the bar-room. I am thankful for small mercies. . . . I accept

the clangour and jangle of contrary tendencies. I find my account in sots and bores also. They give a reality to the circumjacent picture, which such a vanishing meteorous appearance can ill spare. In the morning I awake and find the old world, wife, babes and mother, Concord and Boston, the dear old spiritual world and even the dear old devil not far off. If we will take the good we find, asking no questions, we shall have heaping measures. The great gifts are not got by analysis. Everything good is on the highway. The middle region of our being is the temperate zone. We may climb into the thin and cold realm of pure geometry and lifeless science, or sink into that of sensation. Between these extremes is the equator of life, of thought, of spirit, of poetry,—a narrow belt. . . .

The mid-world is best. Nature, as we know her, is no saint. The lights of the church, the ascetics, Gentoos and corn-eaters, she does not distinguish by any favour. She comes eating and drinking and sinning. Her darlings, the great, the strong, the beautiful, are not children of our law; do not come out of the Sunday School, nor weigh their food, nor punctually keep the commandments. If we will be strong with her strength we must not harbour such disconsolate consciences, borrowed too from the consciences of other nations. We must set up the strong present tense against all the rumours of wrath, past or to come. So many things are unsettled which it is of the first importance to settle;—and, pending their settlement, we will do as we do. . . . Life itself is a bubble and a scepticism, and a sleep within a sleep. Grant it, and as much more as they will,—but thou, God's darling! heed thy private dream; thou wilt not

be missed in the scorning and scepticism; there are enough of them; stay there in thy closet and toil until the rest are agreed what to do about it.

Essays: Experience.

NATURE ELUDES US

QUITE analogous to the deceits in life, there is, as might be expected, a similar effect on the eye from the face of external nature. There is in woods and waters a certain enticement and flattery, together with a failure to yield a present satisfaction. This disappointment is felt in every landscape. I have seen the softness and beauty of the summer clouds floating feathery overhead, enjoying, as it seemed, their height and privilege of motion, whilst yet they appeared not so much the drapery of this place and hour, as forelooking to some pavilions and gardens of festivity beyond. It is an odd jealousy, but the poet finds himself not near enough to his object. The pine-tree, the river, the bank of flowers before him does not seem to be nature. Nature is still elsewhere. This or this is but outskirt and a far-off reflection and echo of the triumph that has passed by and is now at its glancing splendour and heyday, perchance in the neighbouring fields, or, if you stand in the field, then in the adjacent woods. The present object shall give you this sense of stillness that follows a pageant which has just gone by. What splendid distance, what recesses of ineffable pomp and loveliness in the sunset! But who can go where they are, or lay his hand or plant his foot thereon? Off they fall from the round world forever and ever.

Ibid., Nature.

MUTABILITY

If we were not of all opinions! If we did not in any moment shift the platform on which we stand, and look and speak from another! If there could be any regulation, any "one-hour rule," that a man should never leave his point of view without sound of trumpet! I am always insincere, as always knowing there are other moods. . . .

I talked yesterday with a pair of philosophers; I endeavoured to show my good men that I liked everything by turns and nothing long; that I loved the centre, but doated on the superficies; that I loved man, if men seemed to me mice and rats; that I revered saints, but woke up glad that the old pagan world stood its ground and died hard; that I was glad of men of every gift and nobility, but would not live in their arms. Could they but once understand that I loved to know that they existed, and heartily wished them God-speed, yet, out of my poverty of life and thought, had no word or welcome for them when they came to see me, and could well consent to their living in Oregon for any claim I felt on them, — it would be a great satisfaction.

Essays: Nominalist and Realist.

MAN

That no single end may be selected and nature judged thereby, appears from this, that if man himself be considered as the end, and it be assumed that the final cause of the world is to make holy or wise or beautiful men, we see that it has not succeeded. Read alternately in natural and in civil history, a treatise of astronomy for example, with a volume of French

Mémoires pour servir. When we have spent our wonder in computing this wasteful hospitality with which boon Nature turns off new firmaments without end into her wide common, as fast as the madrepores make coral, — suns and planets hospitable to souls, — and then shorten the sight to look into this court of Louis Quatorze, and see the game that is played there, — duke and marshal, abbé and madame, — a gambling table where each is laying traps for the other, where the end is ever by some lie or fetch to outwit your rival and ruin him with this solemn fop in wigs and stars, — the king; one can hardly help asking if this planet is a fair specimen of the so generous astronomy, and if so, whether the experiment have not failed, and whether it be quite worth while to make more, and glut the innocent space with so poor an article.

I think we feel not much otherwise if, instead of beholding foolish nations, we take the great and wise men, the eminent souls, and narrowly inspect their biography. None of them seen by himself, and his performance compared with his promise or idea, will justify the cost of that enormous apparatus of means by which this spotted and defective person was at last procured.

Nature, Addresses, and Lectures: The Method of Nature.

THE PROBLEM

The Time is the child of the Eternity. The main interest which any aspects of the Times can have for us, is the great spirit which gazes through them, the light which they can shed on the wonderful questions, What we are? and Whither we tend? We do not wish

to be deceived. Here we drift, like white sail across the wild ocean, now bright on the wave, now darkling in the trough of the sea; — but from what port did we sail? Who knows? Or to what port are we bound? Who knows? There is no one to tell us but such poor weather-tossed mariners as ourselves, whom we speak as we pass, or who have hoisted some signal, or floated to us some letter in a bottle from far. But what know they more than we? They also found themselves on this wondrous sea. No; from the older sailors, nothing. Over all their speaking-trumpets, the grey sea and the loud winds answer, Not in us; not in Time.

Nature, Addresses, and Lectures: Lecture on the Times.

SENTENCES

We love characters in proportion as they are impulsive and spontaneous. . . . When we see a soul whose acts are all regal, graceful and pleasant as roses, we must thank God that such things can be and are, and not turn sourly on the angel and say, "Crump is a better man with his grunting resistance to all his native devils."

Essays: Spiritual Laws.

For, though the celestial rapture falling out of heaven seizes only upon those of tender age, and although a beauty overpowering all analysis or comparison, and putting us quite beside ourselves, we can seldom see after thirty years, yet the remembrance of these visions outlasts all other remembrances, and is a wreath of flowers on the oldest brows.

Ibid., Love.

We think our civilization near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star.

Essays: Politics.

The good globe is faithful, and carries us securely through the celestial spaces, anxious or resigned: we need not interfere to help it on.

Ibid., New England Reformers.

There is in the action of his mind a long Atlantic roll not known except in deepest waters.

English Traits, xiv.

Pride is handsome, economical; pride eradicates so many vices, letting none subsist but itself, that it seems as if it were a great gain to exchange vanity for pride. . . . Vanity costs money, labour, horses, men, women, health and peace, and is still nothing at last; a long way leading nowhere. Only one drawback; proud people are intolerably selfish, and the vain are gentle and giving.

Conduct of Life: Wealth.

There are eyes, to be sure, that give no more admission into the man than blueberries. Others are liquid and deep, — wells that a man might fall into; — others are aggressive and devouring, seem to call out the police, take all too much notice, and require crowded Broadways and the security of millions to protect individuals against them. The military eye I meet, now darkly sparkling under clerical, now under rustic brows. 'T is the city of Lacedæmon; 't is a stack of bayonets. *Ibid., Behaviour.*

If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

Nature.

In good health, the air is a cordial of incredible virtue. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. *Ibid.*

Roses and violets renew their race like oaks, and flights of painted moths are as old as the Alleghanies.

Letters and Social Aims: Poetry and Imagination.

How silent, how spacious, with room for all, yet without place to insert an atom, — in graceful succession, in equal fulness, in balanced beauty, the dance of the hours goes forward still. Like an odour of incense, like a strain of music, like a sleep, it is inexact and boundless. It will not be dissected, nor unravelled, nor shown.

Nature, Addresses, and Lectures: The Method of Nature.

The globe that swims so silently with us through the sea of space has never a port, but with its little convoy of friendly orbs pursues its voyage through the signs of heaven, to renew its navigation again for ever. *The Senses and the Soul.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
1809–1865

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

FOURSCORE and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
1811–1863

THE MUSE OF HISTORY

THE actors in the old tragedies, as we read, piped their iambics to a tune, speaking from under a mask, and wearing stilts and a great head-dress. 'T was thought the dignity of the Tragic Muse required these appurtenances, and that she was not to move except to a measure and cadence. So Queen Medea slew her children to a slow music: and King Agamemnon perished in a dying fall (to use Mr. Dryden's words): the Chorus standing by in a set attitude, and rhythmically and decorously bewailing the fates of those great crowned persons. The Muse of History hath encumbered herself with ceremony as well as her sister of Theatre. She too wears the mask and the cothurnus, and speaks to measure. She, too, in our age, busies herself with the affairs only of kings; waiting on them obsequiously and stately, as if she were but a mistress of Court ceremonies, and had nothing to do with the registering of the affairs of the common people.

Esmond, chap. i.

JOHN RUSKIN
1819–1900

REAL ENJOYMENT

All real and wholesome enjoyments possible to man have been just as possible to him since first he was made of the earth as they are now; and they are possible to him chiefly in peace. To watch the corn grow, and the blossoms set; to draw hard breath over plough-share or spade; to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray — these are the things that make men happy. . . . Now and then a wearied king, or a tormented slave, found out where the true kingdoms of the world were, and possessed himself, in a furrow or two of garden ground, of a truly infinite dominion.

Modern Painters, III, iv, 17.

VENICE

A city of marble did I say? nay, rather a golden city, paved with emerald. For truly, every pinnacle and turret glanced or glowed, overlaid with gold, or bossed with jasper. Beneath, the unsullied sea drew, in deep breathing, to and fro, its eddies of green wave. . . . It lay along the face of the waters, no larger, as its captains saw it from their masts at evening, than bar of sunset that could not pass away. . . . A world from which all ignoble care and petty thoughts were vanished, with all the common and poor elements of life. No foulness, nor tumult, in these tremulous streets, that filled, or fell, beneath the moon. . . . And around them, far as the eye could reach, still the soft

moving of stainless waters proudly pure; as not the flower, so neither the thorn nor the thistle, could grow in the glancing fields. Ethereal strength of Alps, dreamlike, vanishing in high procession beyond the Torcellan shore; blue islands of Paduan hills, poised in the golden west.

Modern Painters, V, ix, 9.

WHAT THE BIRDS SEE

We know that gentians grow on the Alps, and olives on the Apennines; but we do not enough conceive for ourselves that variegated mosaic of the world's surface which a bird sees in its migration, that difference between the districts of the gentian and of the olive which the stork and the swallow see far off, as they lean upon the scirocco wind.

Stones of Venice, II, vi.

FIRST SIGHT OF THE ALPS

None of us seem to have thought the Alps would be visible without profane exertion in climbing hills. We dined at four, as usual, and, the evening being entirely fine, went out to walk, all of us — my father and mother and Mary and I.

We must have still spent some time in town-seeing, for it was drawing towards sunset when we got up to some sort of garden promenade — west of the town, I believe; and high above the Rhine, so as to command the open country across it to the south and west. At which open country of low undulation, far into blue, — gazing as at one of our own distances from Malvern of Worcestershire, or Dorking of Kent, — suddenly — behold — beyond!

There was no thought in any of us for a moment of

their being clouds. They were clear as crystal, sharp on the pure horizon sky, and already tinged with rose by the sinking sun. Infinitely beyond all that we had ever thought or dreamed, — the seen walls of lost Eden could not have been more beautiful to us; not more awful, round heaven, the walls of sacred Death.

Præterita, I, chap. vi.

FIREFLIES

Fonte Branda I last saw with Charles Norton, under the same arches where Dante saw it. We drank of it together, and walked together that evening on the hills above, where the fireflies among the scented thickets shone fitfully in the still undarkened air. *How* they shone! moving like fine-broken starlight through the purple leaves. How they shone! through the sunset that faded into thunderous night, . . . the fireflies everywhere in sky and cloud rising and falling, mixed with the lightning, and more intense than the stars.

Præterita, III, chap. iv.

WALT WHITMAN
1819–1892

MUSIC

Never did music more sink into and soothe and fill me — never so prove its soul-rousing power, its impossibility of statement. Especially in the rendering of one of Beethoven's master septettes . . . was I carried away, seeing, absorbing many wonders. Dainty abandon, sometimes as if Nature laughing on a hillside in the sunshine; serious and firm monotonies, as of winds; a horn sounding through the tangle of the forest, and the dying echoes; soothing floating of waves, but presently rising in surges, angrily lashing, muttering, heavy; piercing peals of laughter, for interstices; now and then weird, as Nature herself is in certain moods — but mainly spontaneous, easy, careless — often the sentiment of the postures of naked children playing or sleeping. It did me good even to watch the violinists drawing their bows so masterly — every motion a study. I allowed myself, as I sometimes do, to wander out of myself. The conceit came to me of a copious grove of singing birds, and in their midst a simple harmonic duo, two human souls, steadily asserting their own pensiveness, joyousness.

Specimen Days, p. 158.

MATTHEW ARNOLD
1822–1888

OXFORD

Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! "There are our young barbarians, all at play!" And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection — to beauty in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? — nearer perhaps than all the science of Tübingen. Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic! who hast given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and to heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines! Homes of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!

Essays in Criticism.

SAMUEL BUTLER
1835–1902

FLEET STREET

THERE are infinite attractions in London. I have seen many foreign cities, but I know none so commodious, or, let me add, so beautiful. I know of nothing in any foreign city equal to the view down Fleet Street, walking along the north side from the corner of Fetter Lane. It is often said that this has been spoiled by the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway bridge over Ludgate Hill; I think, however, the effect is more imposing now than it was before the bridge was built. Time has already softened it; it does not obtrude itself; it adds greatly to the sense of size, and makes us doubly aware of the movement of life, the colossal circulation to which London owes so much of its impressiveness. . . . Vast as is the world below the bridge, there is a vaster still on high, and when trains are passing, the steam from the engine will throw the dome of St. Paul's into the clouds, and make it seem as though there were a commingling of earth and some far-off mysterious palace in dreamland. I am not very fond of Milton, but I admit that he does at times put me in mind of Fleet Street.

Alps and Sanctuaries, pp. 19–20.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
1837–1909

BYRON

NOTHING in Byron is so worthy of wonder and admiration as the scope and range of his power. New fields and ways of work, had he lived, might have given room for exercise and matter for triumph to that "most fiery spirit." As it is, his work was done at Missolonghi; all of his work for which the fates could spare him time. A little space was allowed him to show at least a heroic purpose, and attest a high design; then, with all things unfinished before him and behind, he fell asleep after many troubles and triumphs. Few can ever have gone wearier to the grave; none with less fear. He had done enough to earn his rest. Forgetful now and set free for ever from all faults and foes, he passed through the doorway of no ignoble death out of reach of time, out of sight of love, out of hearing of hatred, beyond the blame of England and the praise of Greece. In the full strength of spirit and of body his destiny overtook him, and made an end of all his labours. He had seen and borne and achieved more than most men on record. "He was a great man, good at many things, and now he has achieved this also to be at rest."

Essays and Studies, pp. 257–78.

WALTER PATER
1839–1894

LA GIOCONDA

THE presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which "all the ends of the world are come," and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants: and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the

delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands.

The Renaissance, pp. 129–30.

EPILOGUE

EVERY moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive for us, — for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy? To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstacy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. *The Renaissance*, pp. 249–50.

THE RED HAWTHORN

I HAVE remarked how, in the process of our brain-building, as the house of thought in which we live gets itself together like some airy bird's nest of floating thistle-down and chance straws, compact at last, little accidents have their consequence; and thus it happened that, as he walked one evening, a garden gate, usually closed, stood open; and lo! within, a great red hawthorn, in full flower, embossing heavily the bleached and twisted trunk and branches, so aged that there were but few green leaves thereon — a plumage of tender, crimson fire out of the heart of the dry wood. The perfume of the tree had now and again reached him, in the currents of the wind, over the wall, and he had wondered what might be behind it, and was now allowed to fill his arms with the flowers — flowers enough for all the old blue-china pots along the chimney-piece, making fête in the children's room. Was it some periodic moment in the expansion of soul within him, or mere trick of heat in the heavily-laden summer air? But the beauty of the thing struck home to him feverishly, and in dreams, all night, he loitered along a magic roadway of crimson flowers, which seemed to open ruddily in thick, fresh masses about his feet, and fill softly all the little hollows in the banks on either side. Always afterwards, summer by summer, as the flowers came on, the blossom of the red hawthorn still seemed to him absolutely the reddest of all things; and the goodly crimson, still alive in the works of old Venetian masters, or old Flemish tapestries, called out always from afar the recollection of the flame in those perishing little petals, as it pulsed gradually

out of them, kept long in the drawers of an old cabinet.

The Child in the House.

LONDON SUBURBS

HERE, the surface of things is certainly humdrum, the streets dingy, the green places, where the child goes a-maying, tame enough. But nowhere are things more apt to respond to the brighter weather, nowhere is there so much difference between rain and sunshine, nowhere do the clouds roll together more grandly; those quaint suburban pastorals gathering a certain quality of grandeur from the background of the great city, with its weighty atmosphere, and portent of storm in the rapid light on dome and bleached stone steeples.

Appreciations: Charles Lamb, pp. 125–26.

HENRY JAMES
1843–1916

FLAUBERT

Let Flaubert always be cited as one of the devotees and even, when people are fond of the word, as one of the martyrs of the plastic idea; but let him be still more considerately preserved and more fully presented as one of the most conspicuous of the faithless. For it was not that he went too far, it was on the contrary that he stopped too short. He hovered forever at the public door, in the outer court, the splendour of which very properly beguiled him, and in which he seems still to stand as upright as a sentinel and as shapely as a statue. But that immobility and even that erectness were paid too dear. The shining arms were meant to carry further, the other doors were meant to open. He should at least have listened at the chamber of the soul. *Essays in London*, p. 158.

A PARIS NIGHT

The light in her beautiful, formal room was dim, though it would do, as everything would always do; the hot night had kept out lamps, but there was a pair of clusters of candles that glimmered over the chimney-piece like the tall tapers of an altar. The windows were all open, their redundant hangings swaying a little, and he heard once more, from the empty court, the small plash of the fountain. From beyond this, and as from a great distance — beyond the court, beyond the *corps de logis* forming the front

— came, as if excited and exciting, the vague voice of Paris. Strether had all along been subject to sudden gusts of fancy in connection with such matters as these — odd starts of the historic sense, suppositions and divinations with no warrant but their intensity. Thus and so, on the eve of the great recorded dates, the days and nights of revolution, the sounds had come in, the omens, the beginnings broken out. They were the smell of revolution, the smell of the public temper — perhaps simply the smell of blood.

The Ambassadors, pp. 420–21.

IN THE TWILIGHT

CERTAIN aspects of the connection of these young women show for us, such is the twilight that gathers about them, in the likeness of some dim scene in a Maeterlinck play; we have positively the image, in the delicate dusk, of the figures so associated and yet so opposed, so mutually watchful: that of the angular, pale princess, ostrich-plumed, black-robed, hung about with amulets, reminders, relics, mainly seated, mainly still, and that of the upright, restless, slow-circling lady of her court, who exchanges with her, across the black water streaked with evening gleams, fitful questions and answers.

The Wings of the Dove, p. 364.

REFUGEES AT RYE

IT was in September, in a tiny Sussex town which I had not quitted since the outbreak of the war, and here the advent of our first handful of fugitives before the warning of Louvain and Aerschoot and Termonde and Dinant had just been announced. Our small hill-top city, covering the steep sides of the

compact pedestal crowned by its great church, had reserved a refuge at its highest point; and we had waited all day, from occasional train to train, for the moment at which we should attest our hospitality. It came at last, but late in the evening, when a vague outside rumour called me to my doorstep, where the unforgettable impression at once assaulted me. Up the precipitous little street that led from the station, over the old grass-grown cobbles where vehicles rarely pass, came the panting procession of the homeless and their comforting, their almost clinging entertainers, who seemed to hurry them on as in a sort of overflow of expression of the fever of charity. It was swift and eager, in the autumn darkness and under the flare of a single lamp — with no vociferation and, but for a woman's voice, scarce a sound save the shuffle of mounting feet and the thick-drawn breath of emotion. The note I except, however, was that of a young mother carrying her small child and surrounded by those who bore her on and on, almost lifting her as they went together. The resonance through our immemorial old street of her sobbing and sobbing cry was the voice itself of history; it brought home to me more things than I could then quite take the measure of, and these just because it expressed for her not direct anguish, but the incredibility, as who should say, of honest assured protection. Months have elapsed, and from having been then one of a few hundred she is now one of scores and scores of thousands: yet her cry is still in my ears, whether to speak most of what she had lately or of what she actually felt; and it plays to my own sense, as a great fitful, tragic light over the dark exposure of her people. *Within the Rim*, pp. 57–59.

ROBERT BRIDGES

ENGLAND IN THE GREAT WAR

THE progress of mankind on the path of liberty and humanity has been suddenly arrested and its promise discredited by the apostasy of a great people, who, casting off as a disguise their professions of Honour, now openly avow that the ultimate faith of their hearts is in material force. . . .

From the consequent miseries, the insensate and interminable slaughter, the hate and filth, we can turn to seek comfort only in the quiet confidence of our souls; and we look instinctively to the seers and poets of mankind, whose sayings are the oracles and prophecies of loveliness and lovingkindness. Common diversions divert us no longer; our habits and thoughts are searched by the glare of the conviction that man's life is not the ease that a peace-loving generation has found it or thought to make it, but the awful conflict with evil which philosophers and saints have depicted; and it is in their abundant testimony to the good and beautiful that we find support for our faith, and distraction from a grief that is intolerable constantly to face, nay impossible to face without that trust in God which makes all things possible.

We may see that our national follies and sins have deserved punishment; and if in this revelation of rottenness we cannot ourselves appear wholly sound, we are still free and true at heart, and can take hope in contrition, and in the brave endurance of suffer-

ings that should chasten our intentions and conduct; we can even be grateful for the discipline: but beyond this it is offered us to take joy in the thought that our country is called of God to stand for the truth of man's hope, and that it has not shrunk from the call. Here we stand upright, and above reproach: and to show ourselves worthy will be more than consolation; for truly it is the hope of man's great desire, the desire for brotherhood and universal peace to men of good-will, that is at stake in this struggle.

Britons have ever fought well for their country, and their country's Cause is the high Cause of Freedom and Honour. That fairest earthly fame, the fame of Freedom, is inseparable from the names of Albion, Britain, England: it has gone out to America and the Antipodes, hallowing the names of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; it has found a new home in Africa: and this heritage is our glory and happiness. We can therefore be happy in our sorrows, happy even in the death of our beloved who fall in the fight; for they die nobly, as heroes and saints die, with hearts and hands unstained by hatred or wrong.

The Spirit of Man: Preface.

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

MAN

MAN, so far as natural science by itself is able to teach us, is no longer the final cause of the universe, the Heaven-descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity, science, indeed, as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings famine, disease, and mutual slaughter, fit nurses of the future lords of creation, have gradually evolved, after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a long space broken the contented silence of the universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no

longer. "Imperishable monuments" and "immortal deeds," death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that *is* be better or be worse for all that the labour, genius, devotion, and suffering of men have striven through countless generations to effect.

Foundations of Belief, pp. 30–31.

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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
1850–1894

HAPPINESS

THOUGH I write so little, I pass all my hours of field-work in continual converse and imaginary correspondence. I scarce pull up a weed, but I invent a sentence on the matter to yourself; it does not get written; *autant en emportant les vents*; but the intent is there, and for me (in some sort) the companionship. To-day for instance, we had a great talk. I was toiling, the sweat dripping from my nose, in the hot fit after a squall of rain: methought you asked me — frankly, was I happy. Happy (said I); I was happy only once; that was at Hyères; it came to an end from a variety of reasons, decline of health, change of place, increase of money, age with his stealing steps; since then, as before then, I know not what it means. But I know pleasure still; pleasure with a thousand faces, and none perfect, a thousand tongues all broken, a thousand hands, and all of them with scratching nails. High among these I place this delight of weeding out here alone by the garrulous water, under the silence of the high wood, broken by incongruous sounds of birds. And take my life all through, look at it fore and back, and upside down, — though I would very fain change myself, I would not change my circumstances, unless it were to bring you here. And yet God knows perhaps this intercourse of writing serves as well; and I wonder, were you here indeed, would I commune so continually with the thought of you. I say "I wonder" for a form; I know, and I know I should not.

Stevenson, Vailima Letters, 1895, pp. 56–57.

WOODROW WILSON

SPEECH TO CONGRESS

It is a distressing and oppressive duty, gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts, — for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations, and make the world itself at last free.

To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything we are, and everything we have, with the pride of those who know the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.

CHARLES MONTAGU DOUGHTY

ARABIA

And now come down to Arabia, we are passed from known landmarks. Two chiefly are the perils in Arabia, famine and the dreadful-faced harpy of their religion; a third is the rash weapon of every Ishmaelite robber. The traveller must be himself, in men's eyes, a man worthy to live under the bent of God's heaven, and were it without a religion: he is such who has a clean human heart and long-suffering under his bare shirt; it is enough, and though the way be full of harms, he may travel to the ends of the world. Here is a dead land, whence, if he die not, he shall bring home nothing but a perpetual weariness in his bones. The Semites are like to a man sitting in a cloaca to the eyes, and whose brows touch heaven. Of the great antique humanity of the Semitic desert, there is a moment in every adventure wherein a man may find to make his peace with them, so he know the Arabs. The sour Wahâby fanaticism has in these days cruddled the hearts of the nomads, but every Bedouin tent is sanctuary in the land of Ishmael (so there be not in it some cursed Jael). If the outlandish person come alone to strange nomad booths, let him approach boldly, and they will receive him. It is much if they heard of thee any good report; and all the Arabs are at the beginning appeased with fair words. The oases villages are more dangerous; Bedouin colonies at first, they have corrupted the ancient tradition of the desert; their souls are canker-

weed beds of fanaticism. — As for me who write, I pray that nothing be looked for in this book but the seeing of an hungry man and the telling of a most weary man; for the rest the sun made me an Arab, but never warped me to Orientalism.

Travels in Arabia Deserta, I, p. 56.

THE SUN

THE summer's night at end, the sun stands up as a crown of hostile flames from that huge covert of inhospitable sandstone bergs; the desert day dawns not little and little, but it is noon-tide in an hour. The sun, entering as a tyrant upon the waste landscape, darts upon us a torment of fiery beams, not to be remitted till the far-off evening. — No matins here of birds; not a rock partridge-cock, calling with blithesome chuckle over the extreme waterless desolation. Grave is that giddy heat upon the crown of the head; the ears tingle with a flickering shrillness, a subtle crepitation it seems, in the glassiness of this sun-stricken nature: the hot sand-blink is in the eyes, and there is little refreshment to find in the tent's shelter; the worsted booths leak to this fiery rain of sunny light. Mountains, looming like dry bones through the thin air, stand far around about us: the savage flank of Ybba Moghrair, the high spire and ruinous stacks of el-Jebâl, Chebâd, the coast of Helwân! Herds of the weak nomad camels waver dispersedly, seeking pasture in the midst of this hollow fainting country, where but lately the swarming locusts have fretted every green thing. This silent air burning about us, we endure breathless till the assr: when the dazing Arabs in the tents revive after their heavy hours. The lingering day draws down to the sun-setting; the

herdsmen, weary of the sun, come again with the cattle, to taste in their menzils the first sweetness of mirth and repose. — The day is done, and there rises the nightly freshness of this purest mountain air: and then to the cheerful song and the cup at the common fire. The moon rises ruddy from that solemn obscurity of jebel like a mighty beacon: — and the morrow will be as this day, days deadly drowned in the sun of the summer wilderness.

Travels in Arabia Deserta, I, p. 323.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

SHAKESPEARE AND BUNYAN

Put your Shakespearian hero and coward, Henry V and Pistol or Parolles, beside Mr. Valiant and Mr. Fearing, and you have a sudden revelation of the abyss that lies between the fashionable author who could see nothing in the world but personal aims and the tragedy of their disappointment or the comedy of their incongruity, and the field preacher who achieved virtue and courage by identifying himself with the purpose of the world as he understood it. The contrast is enormous: Bunyan's coward stirs your blood more than Shakespear's hero, who actually leaves you cold and secretly hostile. You suddenly see that Shakespear, with all his flashes and divinations, never understood virtue and courage, never conceived how any man who was not a fool could, like Bunyan's hero, look back from the brink of the river of death over the strife and labour of his pilgrimage, and say, "Yet do I not repent me"; or, with the panache of a millionaire, "bequeath my sword to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it." This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

Man and Superman, Epistle Dedicatory.

JOSEPH CONRAD

YOUTH

I NEED not tell you what it is to be knocking about in an open boat. I remember nights and days of calm when we pulled, we pulled, and the boat seemed to stand still, as if bewitched within the circle of the sea horizon. I remember the heat, the deluge of rain-squalls that kept us baling for dear life (but filled our water-cask), and I remember sixteen hours on end with a mouth dry as a cinder and a steering-oar over the stern to keep my first command head on to a breaking sea. I did not know how good a man I was till then. I remember the drawn faces, the dejected figures of my two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more — the feeling that I could last for ever, outlast the sea, the earth, and all men; the deceitful feeling that lures us on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort — to death; the triumphant conviction of strength, the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that with every year grows dim, grows cold, grows small, and expires — and expires, too soon — before life itself.

Conrad, Youth, pp. 41–42.

THE ENGLISH SPEECH

A FEW strokes brought us alongside, and it was then that, for the very first time in my life, I heard myself addressed in English — the speech of my secret choice, of my future, of long friendships, of the deep-

est affections, of hours of toil and hours of ease, and of solitary hours too, of books read, of thoughts pursued, of remembered emotions — of my very dreams! And if (after being thus fashioned by it in that part of me which cannot decay) I dare not claim it aloud as my own, then, at any rate the speech of my children. Thus small events grow memorable by the passage of time. As to the quality of the address itself I cannot say it was very striking. Too short for eloquence, and devoid of all charm of tone, it consisted precisely of the three words, "Look out there," growled out huskily above my head.

Some Reminiscences.

G. LOWES DICKINSON

EAST AND WEST

In China letters are respected not merely to a degree but in a sense which must seem, I think, to you unintelligible and overstrained. But there is a reason for it. Our poets and literary men have taught their successors, for long generations, to look for good not in wealth, not in power, not in miscellaneous activity, but in a trained, a choice, an exquisite appreciation of the most simple and universal relations of life. To feel, and in order to feel to express, or at least to understand the expression of all that is lovely in Nature, all that is poignant and sensitive in man, is to us in itself a sufficient end. A rose in a moonlit garden, the shadow of trees on the turf, almond bloom, scent of pine, the wine-cup and the guitar; these and the pathos of life and death, the long embrace, the hand stretched out in vain, the moment that glides for ever away, with its freight of music and light, into the shadow and hush of the haunted past, all that we have, all that eludes us, a bird on the wing, a perfume escaped on the gale — to all these things we are trained to respond, and the response is what we call literature.

Letters from a Chinese Official.

H. G. WELLS

LOVE

WHAT moods, what passions, what nights of despair and gathering storms of anger, what sudden cruelties and amazing tendernesses are buried and hidden and implied in every love story! What a waste is there of exquisite things! So each spring sees a million glorious beginnings, a sunlit heaven in every opening leaf, warm perfection in every stirring egg, hope and fear and beauty beyond computation in every forest tree; and in the autumn before the snows come they have all gone — of all that incalculable abundance of life, of all that hope and adventure, excitement and deliciousness, there is scarcely more to be found than a soiled twig, a dirty seed, a dead leaf, black mould, or a rotting feather.

The Research Magnificent, pp. 253–54.

GEORGE SANTAYANA

OLD PHRASES

When the fruits of philosophic reflection, condensed into some phrase, pass into the common language of men, there does not and there cannot accompany them any just appreciation of their meaning or of the long experience and travail of soul from which they have arisen. Few doctrines have suffered more by popularization than the intuitions of Plato. The public sees in Platonic sayings little more than phrases employed by unpractical minds to cloak the emptiness of their yearnings. Finding these fragments of an obsolete speech put to bad uses, we are apt to ignore and despise them, much as a modern peasant might despise the fragment of a frieze or a metope which he found built into his cottage wall. It is not only the works of plastic art that moulder and disintegrate to furnish materials for the barbarous masons of a later age: the great edifices of reason also crumble, their plan is lost, and their fragments, picked up where they happen to lie, become the materials of a feebler thought. In common speech we find such bits of ancient wisdom embedded; they prove the intelligence of some ancestor of ours, but are no evidence of our own. When used in ignorance of their meaning, they become misplaced flourishes, lapses into mystery in the businesslike plainness of our thought.

Yet there is one man, the archæologist, to whom nothing is so interesting as just these stones which a practical builder would have rejected. He forgives the

ignorance and barbarism that placed them where they are; he is absorbed in studying the sculptured surface and delighted if his fancy can pass from them to the idea of the majestic whole to which they once belonged. So in the presence of a much-abused philosophic phrase, we may be interested in reconstructing the experience which once gave it meaning and form. Words are at best the tombs of ideas, and the most conventional formulas of poets or theologians are still good subjects for the archæologist of passion. He may find a treasure there; or at any rate he may hope to be rewarded for his labour by the ideal restoration of some once beautiful temple of Athena.

Poetry and Religion, pp. 118–19.

HUMANITY

MANKIND at large is also, to some minds, an object of piety. But this religion of humanity is rather a desideratum than a fact: humanity does not actually appear to anybody in a religious light. The *nihil homine homini utilius* remains a signal truth, but the collective influence of men and their average nature are far too mixed and ambiguous to fill the soul with veneration. Piety to mankind must be three-fourths pity. There are indeed specific human virtues, but they are those necessary to existence, like patience and courage. Supported on these indispensable habits, mankind always carries an indefinite load of misery and vice. Life spreads rankly in every wrong and impracticable direction as well as in profitable paths, and the slow and groping struggle with its own ignorance, inertia, and folly, leaves it covered in every age of history with filth and blood. It would hardly be possible to exaggerate man's wretchedness if it were not so

easy to overestimate his sensibility. There is à *fond* of happiness in every bosom, but the depths are seldom probed; and there is no doubt that sometimes frivolity and sometimes sturdy habit helps to keep attention on the surface and to cover up the inner void.

Reason in Religion, p. 189.

COSMIC PIETY

THERE is, finally, a philosophic piety which has the universe for its object. This feeling, common to ancient and modern Stoics, has an obvious justification in man's dependence upon the natural world and in its service to many sides of the mind. Such justification of cosmic piety is rather obscured than supported by the euphemisms and ambiguities in which these philosophers usually indulge in their attempt to preserve the customary religious unction. For the more they personify the universe and give it the name of God the more they turn it into a devil. The universe, so far as we can observe it, is a wonderful and immense engine; its extent, its order, its beauty, its cruelty, makes it alike impressive. If we dramatize its life and conceive its spirit, we are filled with wonder, terror, and amusement, so magnificent is that spirit, so prolific, inexorable, grammatical, and dull. Like all animals and plants, the cosmos has its own way of doing things, not wholly rational nor ideally best, but patient, fatal, and fruitful. Great is this organism of mud and fire, terrible this vast, painful, glorious experiment. Why should we not look on the universe with piety? Is it not our substance? Are we made of other clay? All our possibilities lie from eternity hidden in its bosom. It is the dispenser of all our joys. We may address it without superstitious

terrors; it is not wicked. It follows its own habits abstractedly; it can be trusted to be true to its word. Society is not impossible between it and us, and since it is the source of all our energies, the home of all our happiness, shall we not cling to it and praise it, seeing that it vegetates so grandly and so sadly, and that it is not for us to blame it for what, doubtless, it never knew that it did?

Reason in Religion, pp. 190–91.

INJUSTICE

INJUSTICE in this world is not something comparative; the wrong is deep, clear, and absolute in each private fate. A bruised child wailing in the street, his small world for the moment utterly black and cruel before him, does not fetch his unhappiness from sophisticated comparisons or irrational envy; nor can any compensation and celestial harmonies supervening later ever expunge or justify that moment's bitterness. . . . Ignoring that pain will not prevent its having existed; it must remain for ever to trouble God's omniscience and be a part of that hell which the creation too truly involves.

Reason in Society, p. 106.

THE END

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